

THE LOST VOICE OF MAINLINE PROTESTANTISM
OR
WHY MAINLINE PROTESTANTISM HAS BEEN UNABLE TO ESTABLISH AND
MAINTAIN A MINISTRY OR PRESENCE ON BROADCAST TELEVISION

A Professional Project
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
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May 1987

This professional project, completed by

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*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

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ABSTRACT

The Lost Voice of Mainline Protestantism or Why Mainline Protestantism Has Been Unable to Establish and Maintain a Ministry or Presence on Broadcast Television

Marvin D. Steinmetz

This project addresses the question of why the mainline Protestant denominations have been unable to create and maintain a substantial presence or ministry on broadcast television. The secondary objective of this study is to help the mainline church achieve a greater television ministry. By isolating the reasons for the lack of a television ministry, correctives to enhance a greater mainline ministry on television emerge.

This study begins by establishing the overwhelming dominance of Fundamental/Pentecostal religious programming on television today. It progresses through a summary of Fundamental/Pentecostal cosmology/theology, establishing significant differences in teachings between Fundamentalism/Pentecostalism and Mainline Protestantism. In this way a significant challenge to mainline Protestantism is established, adding to the question of why the mainline church has not responded with a television ministry of its own.

Mainline denominations are involved, in a limited way, in television. They maintain relations with commercial broadcast networks and maintain "offices of communications."

They are, however, almost totally dependent upon commercial networks for any exposure they get. It is found that the exposure they do get is not very effective in advancing the mainline church cause.

It is found that there is a fundamental lack of teaching of mainline beliefs in mainline Protestant religious programming. This, together with the radical decline in membership in all mainline Protestant denominations over the past several decades (which is reviewed), reveals the answer to our question. In short, the inability of the mainline denominations to establish a viable television ministry is a symptom of a deeper malady within Protestantism today. This malady is a crisis of confidence in its own Gospel message. This crisis in mainline Protestantism has arisen because of the different set of presuppositions and attitudes about the world and God, that the modern age gave rise to, which challenged traditional teachings. As the mainline church remains unable to regain confidence in its teachings, it is unable to present the Gospel effectively within this new cultural milieu. As such, the mainline Protestant voice on television remains muted and ineffectual. Great resources exist within mainline Protestantism, and these resources (which are reviewed) provide the promise to establish an effective mainline Protestant television ministry.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This study addresses the question of why mainline Protestant denominations have not been able to use television in any significant way. Even with the resources available from their millions of members, in money, talent and spiritual leadership, the mainline Protestant denominations have yet to establish or maintain a viable television ministry or presence. In comparison, the Fundamentalist/Pentecostal groups have made phenomenal strides in television use, and today have a virtual monopoly on the television airwaves.

I was drawn to this question primarily because of my personal response to current Fundamentalist/Pentecostal so-called "Christian" programming on television today. I was disturbed and troubled to discover that the most dominant form of "Christian" television programming had little in common with the Christianity I knew. On "religious" television I heard the Scriptures being grossly misinterpreted and misrepresented, and the Gospel message painfully trivialized and used to divide rather than to bring people together in the spirit of understanding and brotherhood under Christ (i.e., the believers versus the non-believers, the saved versus the unsaved). I viewed shameful

fund-raising practices among the televangelists, ones that were designed to appeal to the baser emotions of the individual (fear and guilt with the promise of great rewards). In addition, I heard faith-healing promises which only accentuated the fraudulent and distorted the Christian message. A case in point occurred on a television broadcast of Pat Robertson's "The 700 Club." Ben Kinchlow, co-host of "The 700 Club," related the following story of a healing conducted by a Christian healer he knew. A sightless man came to see Ben's friend for a healing to restore his sight. The sightless man had no eyeballs. However, Kinchlow continued, the healer was not discouraged, for he believed that all things are possible through God. The healer placed his fingertips upon the man's eyelids and, as he did so, the healer could feel the eyeballs beginning to grow in the empty sockets, and in a moment the blind man was restored to full sight.¹

In short, I was shocked and embarrassed by what was on television in the name of Christianity. I identified with what Martin Marty wrote in his book, Improper Opinion:

I have often thought while driving an auto on a Sunday evening in 'Protestant' areas, that were I not a Christian, most religious radio [television] would keep me from being or becoming one.²

¹ The 700 Club, CBN, 2 Oct. 1983.

² Martin E. Marty, Improper Opinion (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 63.

Problem

The concern, for me, was that there was no significant representation of Protestant Christianity and its Gospel message on the supremely influential medium of television. Religious television programming expressed the views and beliefs almost entirely of the Fundamentalists, Pentecostals and Evangelicals--the ultraconservative end of the religious spectrum. Christianity on television is the domain of evangelicals, charismatics, and faith healers, with elements of sheer exploitation not genuinely based on any religious convictions. This state of affairs was more disturbing given the knowledge that the ultraconservative "Christian" views dominating television today had almost no credibility 30 years ago. The ultraconservatives were "dismissed as hillbillies, 'holy rollers,' and even snakehandlers."³ Yet, today, because of television broadcasting, ultra-conservative views have gained substantial attention and acceptability. Again, the majority of religious television comes out of the narrow range which comprises Fundamental, Evangelical and Pentecostal teachings (with the exception of the televangelist Rev. Robert Schuller).

My concern grew with the realization that the Fundamentalist/Pentecostal brand of "Christianity," by its proliferation on television with all the authority and

³ Martin E. Marty, A Nation of Behavers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976): 106.

legitimacy bestowed thereby, has become elevated to national prominence, for the most part displacing traditional mainline Protestantism. Today, it is the Jerry Falwells and Jimmy Swaggarts who capture secular media attention for the "Christian Protestant" view or position on social, national, or even international issues. Jerry Falwell is now the premiere Christian spokesperson, invited to speak on national television network news and commentary programs. Yet, Jerry Falwell is far from the caliber of prominent Catholic, mainline Protestant or Jewish spiritual leaders. Thus, the person considered representative of the "Christian point of view," and moral watchman, as an ultraconservative, is most unrepresentative of what Protestant Christianity is all about and the Judeo-Christian heritage from which it springs. (There is, of course, no formal displacement of mainline Protestantism by Fundamentalist/Pentecostalism, but the distinction between mainline Protestantism and Fundamentalist/Pentecostalism has become quite blurred in the mind of the secular media and the American public in general.)

As I was disturbed and "turned off" by the banal and provincial character of so much of "Christian" television programming today, so, I thought, are millions of other persons, specifically the non-churched, who are looking for much more reasonableness and depth in their religious pursuit. Because their only exposure to church or Christianity is what they see on television, many persons form a

distorted picture of the Christian faith, are unaware of other options and, consequently, remain suspicious and cynical toward Christianity and thus difficult to approach. In an indirect way, therefore, the dominance of Fundamentalist/Pentecostal programming on television serves to undermine respect for mainline Protestantism in particular and Judeo-Christianity in general.

The virtual monopoly of the television airwaves by Fundamentalist/Pentecostal groups, their rise in legitimacy, their displacement of the mainline church, their negative effect on the religiously curious who are "turned off" by their provincialism, their theology, and ethically questionable fund-raising techniques, led me to ask, "Where is the mainline church in all of this?" Indeed, why is the mainline Protestant voice lacking on today's television? Why does it not have its own television ministry, presence and impact? Is it not true, I asked, that mainline Protestant churches could also use television if they tried? I could not believe that with all the resources available to the mainline denominations, they could remain without a significant television ministry to provide a counter and balance to ultraconservative programming. There had to be a reason.

Definition: Fundamentalist/Pentecostal

Historians and theologians make fine distinctions between the various ultraconservative Christian movements. Some scholars break down the ultraconservatives into four groups: Evangelical, Fundamentalist, Pentecostal and

Charismatic. However, for our purposes, fine distinctions between the ultraconservative groups are not necessary. The televangelists represent a hodgepodge of the ultra-conservative Christian wing, having more in common than differences. Therefore, for our purposes here I have grouped televangelists into one category, Fundamentalist/Pentecostal, to include the four categories: Evangelical, Fundamentalist, Pentecostal and Charismatic.

The key words for all of the televangelists are: charismatic, spirit-filled, born-again, and fundamental. They teach miracle-healing of the physical body and healing of the spirit, salvation as a conversion experience, baptism in the Holy Spirit accompanied by certain complex signs and gifts as evidential signs, prophecy, the inerrancy of the Scriptures in every detail, the imminent return of Christ in person to establish his kingdom, and a pre-millennial theology which includes the battle of Armageddon, destruction of the world, and the "rapture."⁴

These "Christian" views in themselves can be taken as relatively harmless, just another point of view. However, they become quite important when seen in light of the cosmology/theology that lies behind them. In Chapter 2 the cosmology/theology will be investigated more thoroughly, together with the influence of such beliefs on American attitudes.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 88, 117.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this project is to isolate the reason or reasons why the mainline Protestant denominations are unable to establish or maintain a viable presence on television. The secondary purpose is to encourage mainline Protestant use of television. If the reason or reasons for the inability of the mainline church to use television are uncovered, avenues and correctives will emerge which, if adopted, would enhance mainline use of television.

Procedure

At the beginning of this study, I had no idea that it would lead me to the very heart of Protestantism today. To find the answer as to why there is no significant mainline Protestant voice on television today, I have begun by assessing how dominant and extensive the ultraconservative voice is on television. Chapter 2 reviews the reach of Fundamentalist/Pentecostal television, the number and size of their television networks, and audience size.

However, the size of the Fundamentalist/Pentecostal broadcasting networks is of little significance if in fact their programming differs little in content from mainline Protestant beliefs and doctrine (it might seem a bit provincial but nothing more). If, on the other hand, there is a substantial difference in the beliefs between the televangelists and the mainline church, the question of why there is no significant mainline Protestant voice becomes more important. Chapter 2, therefore, describes

the basic beliefs of the Fundamentalists, Pentecostals and Evangelicals and how those beliefs influence attitudes and perceptions.

Chapter 3 reviews the amount and quality of mainline Protestant use of television. It substantiates the contrast between the Fundamentalist/Pentecostal use of television and that of the mainline church. In addition, Chapter 3 looks at the relationship the mainline church has with commercial television and what effect that relationship has on mainline church programming, and the quality of that programming.

Chapter 4 looks at the significant decline of the mainline Protestant church over the past several decades and the root cause of that decline. This helps to explain why the mainline church has not established a television ministry.

Chapter 5 deals with the potential that the mainline church has for establishing its presence on television and looks at some of the correctives that would help the mainline church use television more effectively. It is hoped that with a better understanding of the obstacles limiting mainline church use of television, the mainline Protestant voice can be more solidly established and maintained.

CHAPTER 2

The Electronic Church, Today's Religious Television (Fundamentalist/Pentecostalism)

Number and Size of Networks

A look at the televangelists' broadcasting network gives one the image of an octopus with tentacles that wrap around the earth. The major religious television networks include Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), Jim and Tammy Bakker's PTL (Praise The Lord) Network, and Paul and Jan Crouch's Trinity Broadcasting Network. In addition, there are the programs of Jerry Falwell ("Old Time Gospel Hour"), Jimmy Swaggart, Oral Roberts, and Rex Humbard, which blanket the U.S. and many nations through cable and satellite hookups.

The size of the Fundamentalist/Pentecostal networks is enormous. The Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) alone has eight television stations across the country: Tustin, California; Phoenix, Arizona; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Pembroke Park, Florida; Fishkill, New York; Richmond, Indiana; with one to open in Denver, Colorado, and another under construction to cover the Pacific Northwest from Tacoma-Seattle to the Canadian border. In addition, TBN has a number of low-power stations dotting the U.S. These stations number 26; cable systems carrying TBN number 257

and cover 37 states.¹ There is also European, Asian, and South American coverage via satellite. Of the new satellite system, Paul Crouch, founder of TBN, writes:

High in the midst of heaven, a drama so immense is taking place that Satan and all of Hell's reeling from the impact!

The "Prince of the Power of the Air" (as Satan is described in Ephesians 2:2) is no longer the undisputed "Prince." A new invasion beachhead has been launched into the airwaves! Praise the Lord! Angel II is in orbit, that tiny-winged piece of electronic miracle is picking up "Let's Just Praise the Lord." Twenty-four hours a day Christian Television is now raining down on half of the Western Hemisphere!! WE ARE ON THE AIR WITH SATELLITE CHRISTIAN TELEVISION! Hallelujah!²

Paul Crouch's assessment of the satellite program:

With additional earth satellites already in orbit, we have the potential of literally covering the whole earth with the Gospel simultaneously!³

TBN's overseas network reaches the Caribbean Islands, Taiwan, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, parts of Guatemala, Honduras, Peru and Indonesia. Programs originate in many of the countries and incorporate testimonies taped in the countries as well. The programs reach the coast of mainland China, all of Taiwan, and have a possible viewing audience of 17 million people in these regions.⁴

¹ Ten Years of God's Miracles (Santa Ana, CA: Trinity Broadcasting Network, n.d.), 16.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 17.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 28-29.

TBN plans development of a "network of 100 plus stations linked together by satellite with all our affiliated stations inside and outside the United States."⁵ (A directory of cable affiliates for TBN and TBN Satellite Time Schedule is found in Appendix A, as an example of the number and range of broadcasts.)

M. G. (Pat) Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network has a similar range, with broadcasts throughout the United States and many third-world countries. Pat Robertson announced the opening up of new territory in January 1983, the southern half of Mexico. Pat Robertson's broadcast facilities are some of the most modern in the world and considered the "flagship" of Christian broadcasting.

Twin 10-meter satellite earth dishes, linking RCA Satcom I and the Western Union Westar Satellite, give CBN the capability of broadcasting to every domestic satellite system. CBN is the largest supplier of cable programming in the world on a 24-hour basis.⁶

CBN studies include a 170,000 square foot complex, housing four studios, an international prayer chapel, a recording studio, and 54 telephone counseling booths, and is the largest supplier of cable programming in the world on a 24-hour basis.⁷ "Robertson has swelled the 21-year-old Christian Broadcasting Network into the world's largest

⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

⁶ "The Electronic Church-Big Time Religion," Los Angeles Times, 25 Feb. 1980, pt. I: 3, col. 2.

⁷ Ibid.

nonprofit broadcasting organization with a reported audience of 7 million households on 150 stations."⁸

Jim Bakker's, PTL (Praise The Lord) network has a similar sophistication and range, and now broadcasts in 52 nations. What makes PTL unique is that their broadcasting empire has attracted such a large following and grown so financially successful that a 1,600 acre family retreat center, Heritage USA, was opened. Heritage USA has a recreational and "fun" appeal akin to Disneyland without the rides and Disney characters, and will eventually accommodate several million visitors annually. Of the Heritage USA "Main Street" one reads:

It's a place where you smell freshly popped corn and new paint, where you hear members of the PTL Musical Family and Orchestra producing that peppy upbeat music, familiar to viewers of the Jim Bakker program . . . Flowers in a multitude of brilliant colors, shop fronts with intricately designed details, balloons shaped into poodles and alligators and mice--what a feast for the eyes.⁹

The Heritage USA complex, as reported in the newspaper Heritage Herald, is located in Charlotte, North Carolina, and includes: the Heritage Grand Hotel, with upwards of 7,000 units, featuring a four-story high central atrium; a 650-seat Crystal Palace cafeteria; and the Grand Hall church

⁸ Howard Rosenberg, "Praise The Lord, Lash The Opposition," Los Angeles Times, 25 March 1983, pt. VI: 1, col. 5-6.

⁹ "Main Street is a Delight," Heritage Herald [Charlotte, NC], 2 March 1985: 26, col. 3.

and conference center, able to accommodate meetings of 1,000 people with complete conference services. In process is the building of a 5,000-seat church and campground auditorium for inspirational rallies and functions, and a 350-seat outdoor amphitheater. Also planned is a water park with a giant water slide and wave pool. The water park will have its own mountain.

Recreational Village offers an olympic-size swimming pool, eight tennis courts, shuffleboard, miniature golf, an indoor game room with billiards, and a wide selection of video games (Centipede, Pac-Man, Donkey Kong, etc.). It also has a youth center with roller skating and basketball court, and the usual outdoor activities: horseshoes, bike riding, and a first-class jogging trail. Buffalo Park is the children's recreational area and there is a 350-acre campground with two lakes, wildlife, and facilities for 400 tent and trailer campsites. Heritage Main Street includes a variety of restaurants, boutiques, a bookstore, a general store, a toy store and souvenir shops, together with a miniature old-fashioned train and tram system to transport the 1.8 million people who visited Heritage USA during 1983 alone.

This multimillion dollar complex exemplifies the enormous growth of the televangelists' broadcasting empire. It is an empire of sophisticated broadcast studios, programming, and satellite communication systems whose support requires collecting millions of dollars from the viewing audience. It is solid evidence as well of the

televangelists' vitality and strength, and their rootedness in our society.

Audience Size

Millions of people tune in the televangelists on a regular basis, are staunch supporters and "get something from" the broadcast. Statistics on the number of persons who watch religious television have always been disputed. However, the latest survey was conducted by the A. C. Nielsen Co., the television ratings firm. This is a significant study, as it is the first national rating measurement of religious broadcasting in America. The survey was commissioned by the Christian Broadcasting Network of Virginia Beach, Virginia, and is the first rating to be based on a nationwide sample of metered television sets, including cable users. Seventeen hundred households, including 900 with cable television, were monitored. The survey was released at the annual meeting of the Society of Religion.

The survey found that 61 million people--representing more than 40% of the nation's households with television sets--watched one or more of the top 10 syndicated religious broadcasts during the survey month, February of 1985.¹⁰

The study found that 21% of all U.S. households tuned in to one or more of the top 10 religious programs for at least six minutes each week;

¹⁰ "Survey Points Up Wide Forum TV Gives Preachers," Los Angeles Times, 26 Oct. 1985, pt. I: 1, col. 3.

that doubled to 40.2% when the time period was the entire month of February.¹¹

Following "The 700 Club" with the largest viewing audience was "Jimmy Swaggart," followed by Robert Schuller's "Hour of Power," and the "Jim Bakker Show."¹² (It is worth noting that popular televangelist Robert Schuller does not fall into the category of the Fundamentalist/Pentecostal preacher, as he appeals to a more moderate Protestant audience.)

Fundamentalist/Pentecostal television programming blankets and dominates religious programming on television today. It represents an empire which reaches millions of viewers. With it comes a very particular understanding of the world, the person, and the place of humankind in creation, of God, and Christ. This study, therefore, requires a look at the Fundamentalist/Pentecostal cosmology/theology in order to get a sense of how radically different it is from that of mainline Protestantism.

Cosmology/Theology (Televangelism)

The formats of the Fundamentalist/Pentecostal programs include interviews, news programs, to special reports on social issues, to Scripture lessons, to "Christian" soap operas, to dramas. However, the centerpiece of the televangelists is preaching, and second are personal testimony

¹¹ Ibid., p. 9, col. 2.

¹² Ibid., col. 3.

and prayer. All other programming can be classified as "support programming." All programming tightly conforms to, and is consistent with, Fundamentalist/Pentecostal understanding of Scripture, the Gospel, and Christ--their Christology and cosmology/theology.

It is the theology and world view of the televangelists which is beamed into living rooms and village huts which challenges mainline Protestantism. The televangelists are clear that the goal is no less than to win the "hearts and minds" of all persons. A review of Fundamentalist/Pentecostal cosmology/theology is needed to gain some sense of the dichotomy between mainline Protestant and Fundamentalist/Pentecostal messages. The contrast magnifies the seriousness of the mainline denominations not making significant use of television.

Beliefs

All the major televangelists and their television programs and/or networks share the same theology/cosmology: understanding of the world, humankind, salvation, the Scriptures, Christ and God. It is this mindset which allows for similar teaching and preaching among the televangelists. James Barr, in his study of Fundamentalism, writes:

Contrary to general belief, the core of Fundamentalism resides not in the Bible but is a particular kind of religion.¹³

¹³ James Barr, Fundamentalism (London: SCM Press, 1977), 11.

Of Fundamentalism, Jeffrey Hadden and Charles Swann write:

Fundamentalism is a lonely position. It has cut itself off from the general stream of culture, philosophy, and ecclesiastical tradition. This accounts, in part, for its robust pride. Since it is no longer in union with the wisdom of the ages, it has no standard by which to judge its own religious pretense.¹⁴

The televangelists all share a world view and cosmology/theology emanating from a very privatized and provincial interpretation of the Scriptures. It carries with it perceptions and understandings about the world that are myopic. Complex problems, human motivations, and the paradoxes in living are reduced to simplified categories of "right and wrong," "black and white," "good and evil." Evil, for Fundamentalist/Pentecostals, is seen as a force that lies outside the person, group or institution. It is believed to be an independent metaphysical reality which acts on individuals or groups, corrupting and contaminating them. As such, evil (or Satan) takes root in various human endeavors, social structures, and even particular persons; and evil contaminates them until it becomes a formidable threat to existence of the "good" in creation and the soul of individuals. Today, this evil, for the Fundamentalist/Pentecostals, is manifest in pornography, abortion, homosexuality, prostitution, drug use, anti-Americanism, and rock music. It is manifest in the feminist movement (which

¹⁴ Jeffrey Hadden and Charles Swann, Prime Time Preachers (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1981), 87.

the fundamentalists see as contributing to the breakup of the family and traditional husband and wife roles as prescribed by the Scriptures) and in secular humanism (which is identified with agnosticism, atheism, ethical relativism, and acceptance of evolution). On the international level, evil is manifest in the broad label of communism. The work of Fundamentalist believers, apart from saving their own souls, is to contain the "evil" and abolish it where possible. On the social level, this means taking action against abortion, pornography, etc. On the international level, this means the containment of communism. (Russia and Cuba's influence must be contained, for example, and the current Nicaraguan government must be replaced.) This position, as well, means actual military engagement with evil if necessary (such as in Vietnam, Grenada, and Nicaragua).

Consistent with the fundamentalists' mentality of labeling types of human behavior as either "right" or "wrong," "evil" or "good," is their method of dealing with various social ills. Their method goes little beyond simply denouncing and labeling an offensive behavior as "wrong" and "evil." There is little analysis of the root causes of social ills and little interest in addressing root causes. The reasoning goes something like this: the root cause (of a particular offensive behavior) is evil; evil is countered and contained by recognizing it for what it is (pointing it out), denouncing it, and "exorcising" it

from the individual or group or society. Thus, a prostitute is helped, or saved, by exorcising the evil that possesses her. This can be accomplished by the prostitute accepting Christ as Lord and Savior. (The logical conclusion to this line of reasoning is that evil not purged is evil that must be destroyed and the individual or group along with it if necessary, for evil left, in effect, will eventually destroy all. Thus, the extreme idea that you have to "destroy to save" comes into play, as was expressed in Vietnam: "the village must be destroyed to save it"; or as in another popular phrase with many today, "I'd rather be dead than red"--translation: I'd rather be dead than to be a carrier of evil.")

A case in point, regarding the reduction of all offensive behavior to "evil" was seen in television evangelist Pat Robertson's attitude regarding rock music. On his television program, "The 700 Club," broadcast on November 15, 1983, he put forth his views of rock music. On that program, Robertson made the case that contemporary hard rock music is the work of Satan. To illustrate his point, Robertson held up album covers with grotesque and irreverent scenes, which he described as clearly Satanic. He argued, as well, that the lyrics of songs promote drug use and promiscuity. At one point, Robertson denounced the popular John Lennon song, "Imagine," because it contains the line "Imagine there's no Heaven." According to Robertson, rock music contributes to all social ills and personal sins, to

the moral breakdown of the young, and leads toward the Godless society.

This evil versus good dichotomy corresponds to a particular cosmology and theology which Fundamentalist/Pentecostals hold. In Fundamentalist/Pentecostal cosmology, the cosmos is divided into two distinct realms: the realm of the material world, made up of the earthly world we inhabit and all created phenomena, and the spiritual realm. The spiritual realm exists "beyond" the physical realm. It is in the spiritual realm that God and the angels reside. Heaven is a special place in the spiritual realm, where the individual soul has its birth, and the place that the soul returns after its sojourn on the earth if not condemned. For the Fundamentalist/Pentecostals, the soul's rightful place is in Heaven; the soul's sojourn on earth is alien to it--a kind of purgatory--from which the soul will find escape through death of the physical body. The spiritual realm is "true" reality; the physical world is an aberration, fundamentally impure and contaminated by the forces of evil.

The spiritual realm is also inhabited by the forces of evil (Satan). The two forces, good and evil, are engaged in a fierce struggle for domination and control of the material world, humankind, and the cosmos. A caution is needed here: Fundamentalist/Pentecostalism is not a systematic theology, by any means, and thus contradictions

in their "system" abound. It is, therefore, counter-productive to look for logical consistency. The best that can be done is to just state their theology/cosmology. For example, logical consistency would want to know why the all-powerful good (God) would allow Satan's existence, or create a Satan in the first place? Or why Satan would have any interest in the material world at all? One is left to conclude that struggle between the forces of good and evil is the desire of vain gods with nothing better to do than engage in frivolous pastimes. These questions in themselves, if put forward, would be a serious critique of the Pentecostal belief system.

It is out of this cosmology/theology that the understandings regarding man, salvation, God, man's place in the world, and the future of the world is derived, and which provides the themes that are the mainstay of "Christian" (televangelism) television today. For the Fundamentalist/Pentecostals, the outcome of the world is a horrible one, ending in "hell, fire and brimstone." The earth will be destroyed in the final battle of Armageddon, the last struggle of the forces of good and evil against each other. However, at the climax of the final battle, believers will be raptured, saved, taken up to the Heavenly realm for everlasting life with the Father. Charles Rayler, speaker on the television program "Today in Bible Prophecy," writes in his book, World War III and the Destiny of America:

Millions of people will suddenly disappear from the face of the earth, including infant children. From all walks of life there will be people missing. The freeways, subways, airports and streets will be a shambles as many engineers, pilots, bus drivers, and a multitude of private car owners shall suddenly be caught up out of this world.¹⁵

The televangelists share this "pre-millennial theology" which expects the return of Christ before the thousand-year millennium to "rapture" the believers out of the world before the apocalypse.

This pre-millennial theology is clearly expressed in a sermon delivered on channel 40, Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), in Los Angeles, on December 25, 1983, by the Rev. Dwight Thompson of Downey, California. As the sermon progressed, the preacher affirmed that the nuclear holocaust would bring the end of the world, and he supported his conclusion with references to Scripture, and listed in detail the great number of nuclear weapons at the ready and their awesome destructive power. The nuclear holocaust assured, the only question was whether the individual would escape oblivion. The sermon progressed through a description of the loss of millions of lives in a single nuclear detonation. This laid the foundation for the preacher's call to the congregation to accept Jesus as their only hope for escape from worldly destruction to everlasting life. Through Jesus, the preacher promised, the people would be

¹⁵ Hadden and Swann, 95.

delivered in the "last days." He then extended the invitation to accept Jesus.

Another example as to the depth and importance of apocalyptic thinking among the Fundamentalist/Pentecostals occurred on the Trinity Broadcasting Network. Trinity Broadcasting Network produced a special program to respond to the ABC movie, "The Day After." The ABC movie, broadcast November 29, 1983, was about the effect of a nuclear attack on Kansas City. It showed the devastation, the evaporation of people at ground zero, and the irreversible effects of nuclear radiation on the survivors. TBN found the program to be an attack on America's nuclear defense posture and a statement against nuclear arms for national defense. TBN felt they had to "balance" the ABC movie by airing their own response immediately after the movie ended, to support America's nuclear defense program. It was titled, "The Moment After The Day After." However, the program was much more than a rally for America's nuclear policy. It also provided an opportunity for TBN to talk about the reason for the existence of awesome nuclear weaponry.

The program was hosted by Paul and Jan Crouch with commentary by Hal Lindsey. Hal Lindsey is the author of best selling books affirming Armageddon, supporting his conclusions by extensive references to the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament book of Revelation. For Hal Lindsey, as well as Paul Crouch, the existence of nuclear

weapons supports the contention and belief that the world will be destroyed in the battle of Armageddon. Nuclear weapons are the means.

Crouch asserted at the beginning of the program his confidence that the holocaust would come. He was quick to add, however, that the holocaust would come only after God's people (i.e., his group of believers) had been "taken up" in the rapture. Major time on the program was taken up with Hal Lindsey going over his belief in the communist threat as the evil that will finally be met in the battle of Armageddon. In his book, The Late Great Planet Earth, he argues that Armageddon will come when the armies of Russia attack Israel and meet a response by armies of the West with the subsequent armies of China challenging for control of the world.¹⁶ Lindsey writes:

Imagine cities like London, Paris, Tokyo, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago--obliterated! John says that the Eastern force alone will wipe out a third of the earth's population (Revelation 9:15-18).¹⁷

Lindsey continues:

The sequence is clear in the last chapters of Revelation. First, there is the return of Christ at the climax of the greatest war of all time. Second, Christ separates the surviving believers from the surviving unbelievers; the unbelievers will be judged and cast off the earth (Revelation 20:11-15; cf., Matthew 25:41-46). Third, Christ

¹⁶ Hal Lindsey, The Late Great Planet Earth (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 162.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 166.

establishes the millennial kingdom and the surviving believers go into it as mortals and repopulate the earth (Revelation 20:11-15; cf., Matthew 25:31-40). Fourth, at the end of a thousand years, the unbelieving children rebel, Christ judges them, then He completely changes the old heaven and earth and creates a new one (Revelation 21; Isaiah 65:17; II Peter 3:8-13). This is the ultimate destiny of all persons who are redeemed by Christ.¹⁸

Fundamentalist/Pentecostal theology is inexact as to the ultimate fate of the earth and humankind. Lindsey says that a new heaven and a new earth will be created and will be populated by the believers. Other Pentecostalists emphasize the complete destruction of the earth, with the believers "taken up" from the earth to a spiritual existence in heaven. What is important to note is the "other world" focus of their attention, as well as their "this world" negation, and the predestined fate of humanity and the world.

In this belief system the salvific process is very much out of the hands of the individual. Human beings are little more than spectators and pawns in the cosmic struggle going on apart from them. The only recourse for individual participation in the salvation process is to "get on the right side" of the conflict--to get on the side of God. This is done by accepting Jesus Christ as one's personal Lord and Savior. It is for this reason that the television preachers stress the necessity for a total conversion to

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 178.

Christ, a "baptism in the Holy Spirit." The conversion must be total, complete and all encompassing, for it is only at this depth of conversion that the soul is saved and everlasting life can be achieved.

When saved, in the earthly life, the individual becomes an instrument of God through which Satan, ideally, cannot work, achieves eternal life, and finds rewards of a "peace-filled" heart. Many televangelists promise, as well, material rewards and a trouble-free life for the converted. Thus, personal testimony becomes a central part of televangelist programming. Individuals tell of being hopelessly lost to alcohol or drugs, to a life of crime or irresponsibility, etc., and they testify that with the acceptance of Christ their lives were "turned around." Others testify that after receiving Christ, they find love and marriage or even riches and fame. (A most notable example of this conversion testimony is Charles Colson. He is a convicted Watergate conspirator who "found" Christ in prison and now makes the televangelistic circuit).

In regard to individual salvation, on the one hand, the individual has everything to lose (his soul), but, on the other hand, has no influence on the forces that will determine the fate of his soul. Thus, the Fundamentalist/Pentecostal view of human beings is not a progressive one. The person's only recourse is to accept Christ as Lord and Savior, but that leaves persons little more than helpless children. Like children, passive in the conflicts of

parents, the only option is to align with the eventual "winning" parent. In Fundamentalist/Pentecostal thought, human beings remain pathetic creatures, unable to take part in their own destiny. Thus, their role in worship is reduced to little more than paying homage to the creator.

Given this, Christ's role is little more than a cosmic Pied Piper sent to lead people to an everlasting life in Heaven. Human effort to attain human maturity, spiritual perfection, and social justice is beside the point in Fundamentalist/Pentecostal theology. The only hope for the individual is to follow Christ, wait for the ultimate defeat of Satan, and the soul's ascension to the Heavenly plane. Fundamentalist/Pentecostal outreach programs and relief work with the dispossessed and impoverished people of the world are not primarily motivated from a belief that the life for the impoverished can be qualitatively uplifted, and are not intended to lay the foundations for social equality and justice. Outreach programs are to "prepare" the nonbeliever to make his or her own decision for Christ, to save his or her immortal soul. (However, it is to be acknowledged that such programs do much good by relieving human suffering.)

In the end, individual salvation has no relationship to transforming this world through identifying with the oppressed and downtrodden, confronting the structures that produce human suffering, and actively working to lift all God's creation to universal justice and community.

The Fundamentalist/Pentecostal portrait of human impotence, devaluation of earthly existence and the world, is in stark contrast to mainline Judeo-Christian thought. In Judaism and Christianity, human importance and nobility are stressed, and the fundamental goodness of creation is affirmed. This affirmation finds powerful expression at the beginning of the Scriptures in Genesis. It is in Genesis where we read that the creation of the earth and human beings is judged to be "very good." We are made in God's image, and assigned the supreme place in creation as God's emissary over earth (Gen. 1:26-28). Far from being pawns in relation to forces beyond our influence, human beings are to play an active role in the order of things. This is further emphasized in the garden of Eden when Adam and Eve learn to distinguish "right" from "wrong." Human beings become responsible for playing a part in humankind's redemption, a redemption that includes a reconciliation between human persons, as well as with God.

Fundamentalist/Pentecostal mentality is otherworldly. Earthly life is regarded as transitory. The afterlife is seen to hold true "existence." Consequently, there is a basic suspicion and pessimism regarding advancements in science, technology, and social and psychological insights. The continuing attack on evolution, in particular, and the science that underlies it in general, is a premiere case in point. On one level, evolution is rejected to maintain the centrality of God in the creation of the world and of the

uniqueness of human beings. However, the concern is also based on the assumption that science and the scientific world view take attention away from the true business of the individual, which is "saving" his/her soul (escaping from the bonds of earthly existence to a Heavenly existence). Science encourages the assumption that human life is redeemable on the earthly plane, a notion Fundamentalist/Pentecostals reject.

Scientific advancements are suspect and can be seen as the work of Satan, in that they provide the false hope that humankind can save itself, or participate in some way, to alter the cosmic reality and preordained future of the world. Contemporary "advancements" have only contributed to sin and evil in the world, by encouraging the view that Christ's second coming is not at hand.

A solicitation letter from the televangelist Jim Bakker is particularly revealing on the above points. The letter reads:

What is on your mind right now? . . . Unpaid bills, family problems, a physical ailment, perhaps worries about the unknown?

If that's true, I'd like you to forget those things for a moment and concentrate on this one thought: Jesus is coming soon.

The more I see the events taking place in the world around us, the more I am convinced that Jesus' return could be any day now.

We have never lived in such an era when we can see the literal fulfillment of Bible prophecy over and over again. . . .¹⁹

¹⁹ Jim Bakker, Letter of solicitation [Charlotte, NC] 5 Aug. 1985.

Fundamentalist/Pentecostals use the Scriptures as authority for their world view and beliefs. Much attention is given to their viewing the Scriptures as infallible, but more important is their interpretation that the Scriptures tell of the cosmic struggle between God and Satan. The Scriptures are the authority and source which reveal the future of humankind and the world. Though it is acknowledged that the Scriptures can be approached in various ways, it must also be said that the Fundamentalist/Pentecostal approach is a grave distortion of the Scripture message, having almost nothing to do with their true intent. It belies the very fundamentals of the Judeo-Christian Biblical heritage.

We see from this brief review that Fundamentalist/Pentecostal religion is basically polytheistic. God is not truly sovereign (at least not yet), for God shares power in the spiritual realm with Satan, an almost equally powerful opponent. Two deities, not one, influence events in the cosmos and humankind. The forces of evil vie for victory over the good by working in the material realm to corrupt God's creations. In fact, according to Fundamentalists, the material world is already so contaminated by evil that it is nonredeemable, and man is "lost" in the purgatory of earthly existence.

The above distinctions and implications of Fundamentalist/Pentecostal cosmology/theology are admittedly too brief. However, for our purposes here, it is only necessary

to point out the beliefs of the televangelists, and with it find that Fundamentalist/Pentecostalism is far removed from the Judeo-Christian heritage. It is primarily a sect religion having successfully preempted the mainline Protestant position in American religious life, primarily through the use of television. Certainly, Catholicism and Protestantism have at times more than flirted with elements of world negation, other worldly focus, and presented a harsh God. However, the uniqueness of mainline Protestantism remains its radical monotheism, fundamental affirmation of this world, the possibility of its transformation, through a greater reconciliation of humankind to God. To be sure, there is a tension in mainline Protestantism's concern between this life and the afterlife, but in Fundamentalism there is no tension at all. The soul and its escape from this world is their sole concern. William Steel, a pastor who worked in religious media in Los Angeles, writes:

Today's 'religious' television not only fails to reinforce what is occurring in most mainline churches, but it represents a positive contradiction to the insights and contributions of every major theologian of the past fifty years.²⁰

It is no wonder that the culture has developed stereotypes of 'church' and 'religion.' The most powerful acculturating medium of our time is presenting a practical and superficial definition of those terms for the entire community. . . . A holistic view of the church, representing its

²⁰ William Steel, A Survey of Religious Television Broadcasting in the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area and Proposals for Change, D.Min. Diss., School of Theology at Claremont, CA, 1979 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1979), p. 52.

complexity and its diversity, is absent from television in Los Angeles.²¹

Influence on Attitudes and Perceptions

The Fundamentalist/Pentecostal phenomena could be much more easily dismissed as one viewpoint among others, if their teachings were not so all-pervasive via television. The extent of apocalyptic thinking, for example, goes far beyond the confines of a sect or regional provincialism. There are signs that the Fundamentalist/Pentecostal cosmology/theology has permeated the very core of America's social and political fabric.

Since President Ronald Reagan's election, there has been an increase in paranoia regarding the threat of communism as seen in events from the Grenada invasion to the "Star Wars" proposal to seeing Nicaragua as a serious threat to U.S. security. The evidence is growing that President Reagan holds to the pre-millennial theology, and to the accompanying concept of evil as a metaphysical reality. For Reagan, Russia is the "evil, Godless empire," spreading its venom. Countries labeled communist are all defined as atheistic, Marxist-Leninist. The Sandinista government, for example, is pictured by the Reagan White House as Godless. It is considered an arm of communist Russian expansion--evil vying with good. Over and against communism is the U.S., which is divinely ordained to

²¹ Ibid., p. 49.

contain the spread of communism (i.e., evil).

In a Los Angeles Times article, William Pfaff quotes Reagan from a campaign interview:

"Let us not delude ourselves. The Soviet Union underlies all the unrest that is going on. If they weren't engaged in this game of dominoes, there wouldn't be any hot spots in the world."²²

Of Reagan's belief, Pfaff concludes:

Every dispute or disorder was interpreted in terms of Soviet manipulation. Central America was not allowed the dignity of its own revolution. In the Reagan Administration's eyes, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the guerrillas in El Salvador and those operating in Guatemala, as well as the luckless Maurice Bishop and Hudson Austin in Grenada . . . all were merely figures at the end of strings leading to Moscow.²³

In a speech delivered to the Heritage Foundation, President Reagan sounds like the televangelists:

"The struggle now going on in the world is essentially the struggle between freedom and totalitarianism, between what is right and what is wrong. This is not a simplistic or unsophisticated observation. Rather, it is the beginning of wisdom about the world we live in."²⁴

From the President's speech on Lebanon and on the Caribbean crisis:

Grenada, we were told, was a friendly island paradise for tourism. But it wasn't.

²² William Pfaff, "In Foreign Policy, A Week of Failure," Los Angeles Times, 30 Oct. 1983, pt. IV: 1, col. 1.

²³ Ibid., col. 2-3

²⁴ "President Will Make New Proposal on Strategic Arms," Los Angeles Times, 4 Oct. 1983, pt. I: 16, col. 6.

It was a Soviet-Cuban colony being readied as a major military bastion to export terror and undermine democracy. We got there just in time.²⁵

The President's view about communism's evil is clear in his comment about Grenada. As one commentator put it in speaking of the relative size of the U.S. and Grenada, it is comparable to an elephant and a gnat. This suggests that for Reagan, the force of evil is a metaphysical reality that can empower even the tiniest of groups to bring down the mightiest, and contaminate all its contacts. Robert Scheer, author of With Enough Shovels: Reagan, Bush and Nuclear War, writes:

A month after I interviewed Bush, I was in another airplane and the man beside me was saying, "We have a different regard for human life than those monsters do." He was referring to what he said was the Soviets' belief in winning nuclear war despite casualties that he would find unacceptable. And he added that they are "Godless" monsters. It is this theological defect "that gives them less regard for humanity or human beings."

The man telling me all this was Ronald Reagan. . . .²⁶

In his article, "The President and the Prophets," Yehezkel Landau, lecturer on Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations, quotes President Reagan in a phone conversation

²⁵ "Text of President's Speech on Lebanon, Caribbean Crises," Los Angeles Times, 28 Oct. 1983, pt. I: 16, col. 5.

²⁶ Robert Scheer, With Enough Shovels: Reagan, Bush and Nuclear War (New York: Random House, 1982), 31.

with Tom Kine of AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobbying group on Capitol Hill:

You know, I turn back to your ancient prophets in the Old Testament and the signs foretelling Armageddon, and I find myself wondering if--if we're the generation that's going to see that come about. I don't know if they've noted any of those prophets lately, but believe me, they certainly describe the time we're going through.²⁷

The apocalyptic thinking of Reagan was noticed on the national level by Time magazine:

Reagan's critics wonder whether the President's apparent belief in a particular Biblical scenario for the end of the world means that he might consider nuclear war a divine instrument.²⁸

The "evil" versus "good" mentality (and the cosmology that goes with it) has gained greater respectability, which is evidence that Fundamentalist/Pentecostal thinking has far-reaching consequences. The influence of Fundamentalist/Pentecostal thinking on the perceptions and beliefs about our world are hard to measure. However, as the foregoing suggests, their influence is considerable, and it is an influence that is felt in more ways than in just the belief about the future of our world. Jim Wallis, editor of the Christian periodical Sojourners, writes:

In place of the Biblical Gospel of peace, the television preachers of the right proclaim a Gospel of salvation through military might; in place of the Gospel of compassion, they preach

²⁷ Yehezkel Landau, "The President and the Prophets," Sojourners 13 (June-July 1984): 24.

²⁸ "Armageddon and the End Times," Time, 5 November 1984: 73.

the arrogance of American power; instead of the Gospel that is good news to the poor, they preach a Gospel that honors excessive wealth as a sign of God's favor and leaves the poor to fend for themselves.²⁹

The Fundamentalist/Pentecostals present a formidable challenge to mainline Protestantism. The next section will review how the mainline church has responded to that challenge, by looking at the mainline use of television.

This brief review of Fundamentalist/Pentecostal theology/cosmology reveals the fundamental differences between the mainline Protestant Judeo-Christian tradition and those of the televangelists. What has been discussed is summarized on the following page.

²⁹ "The Roles Religion Plays, Six Experts Debate the Church's Relationship to the State," Newsweek, 17 Sept. 1984: 32.

Summary

Judeo-Christian (Mainline Protestantism)	Fundamental/Pentecostal (Televangelism)
Radical monotheism.	Polytheistic. Two forces share the spiritual realm, Satan and God. They struggle with each other for domination.
World affirming. God's creation is good, and earthly existence is good.	World negating. All creation is tainted with the demonic; earthly existence is transitory--to be escaped.
Creation, humankind and individuals are redeemable.	Creation and humankind are non-redeemable. The individual's only hope is escape to the Heavenly plane.
Salvation is both individualistic and social. People are saved to the degree that they grow in Christ and address social injustice.	Salvation is solely individualistic. The object is to save one's soul from eternal damnation and assure a place in Heavenly existence. Addressing social ills is superfluous beyond preparing individuals to choose Christ.
Human beings share in God's salvation process by doing the will of God in the world.	Human beings are incidental to the process of individual salvation. It depends upon the outcome of the cosmic struggle between Satan and God.
Christ redeems the world through addressing the full unfolding of the human being's capabilities of love and brotherhood and reconciliation to God.	Christ redeems by saving people for Heavenly existence--saving those who have chosen Him as their savior.
The future is open. History is the process of God's action in the world to reconcile the world to God.	The future is closed; the outcome determined. The material world will be destroyed and earthly existence with it.
God's primary quality is love.	God's primary quality is power --the power to defeat Satan.
This world orientation.	Other world orientation.

CHAPTER 3

Mainline Protestant Use of
Television, an Overview

The prevalence of Fundamentalist/Pentecostal cosmology/theology on television brings a greater urgency to the question of why the mainline church is not heard from in any constant and vital way. One wonders why the Christian "high ground" has been so easily abdicated by the mainline church today. The current state of the mainline church's use of television was captured by William Fore, as quoted from his review of the Annenberg Study on Religion and Television. Fore wrote:

It had been hoped that the study could compare and contrast the electronic church, the mainline denominations' offerings and local church programs. Unfortunately, the sheer number of electronic church broadcasts overwhelmed the other two categories in the sample: out of 101 program titles recorded for the content analysis, only eight were local church programs and seven were mainline nationally syndicated or network programs.¹

You will find within mainline Protestant denominations no multimillion dollar entertainment and retreat centers, no state-of-the-art broadcasting studios, no school of communication for the development of "Christian broadcasters," no "Christian" news teams, no vast television networks

¹ William F. Fore, "Religion and Television Report on the Research," Christian Century 101 (18 July 1984): 710.

hooked together by satellites, no nationally recognized celebrity preachers with all but instant access to the commercial networks, and no television stations. Nevertheless, the mainline church does work in broadcast television.

Public Service Time

Without having their own television stations, mainline denominations have two avenues with which to gain television exposure: they can pay for broadcast time for productions they produce themselves, or they can use Public Service Time (PST), which is a specified amount of free time given to public service non-profit organizations. PST is supplied by the broadcast networks, to comply with Federal Communication Commission (FCC) regulations.² PST is used by mainline denominations by having their own productions broadcast on Public Service Time or participating on commercial network programs by supplying pastors or spokespersons for religious network programs. Because of the costs of purchasing network broadcast time, mainline churches are primarily restricted to the second option. Purchasing time, if any, is on a very limited basis. Public Service Time serves a gamut of nonprofit organizations from local food banks, United Way, boys and girls clubs, to providing

² In June 1984, the FCC deregulated guidelines that governed the amount of news and local programming that commercial television stations have been required to carry. This places an uncertain future on the continuance or amount of time given to PST programming. (See "FCC Decides to Deregulate Television Programming," Los Angeles Times, 28 June 1984, pt. 1: 1, col. 4.)

moral/religious messages. It is within the small range of network religious programming that the mainline denominations can gain exposure. PST time requirements are met by a variety of time allocations (5 to 10-second "spots" to 30 or 60-minute programs).

To capitalize on the free Public Service Time, mainline denominations have developed and maintained special ecumenical organizations whose purpose is to work with the commercial broadcasting networks. Such ecumenical organizations provide the networks with pastors who have special ministerial expertise in the given subject to be discussed or reviewed on a religious program.

Traditionally, the networks have turned to mainline denominations for ministerial consultants and speakers, because of the mainline church's broad range of appeal and acceptability. It is a mutually beneficial relationship, whereby the broadcast networks have a resource for their religious programming and the mainline denominations have a chance for some television exposure.

A mainline denomination may produce a particular program (example "Lutheran Hour" or "David and Goliath") and have it accepted for broadcast by the network to fulfill PST requirements. Mostly, however, the network or local station produces their own "religious" program, using denominational resources.

Relying on Public Service Time for access to television restricts both the amount of programming available to

mainline churches and, as we shall see, the content and format of the programs. Also, use of Public Service Time means that what mainline programming there it gets shuttled to time slots least expensive to the networks, times when the lowest number of persons will be watching--called "ghetto" time. Of the three local network television 30-minute religious Public Service Time programs in Los Angeles, ABC's "Personal Dimensions" is aired at 5:30 a.m. Sundays; CBS's "Today's Religion" is aired at 6:30 a.m. Sundays; NBC's "Odyssey" is aired at 7:00 a.m. Sundays.

Ecumenical Liaison with Commercial
Networks (ECUMEDIA)

In Los Angeles, the ecumenical mainline Protestant organization that carries on liaison work with the broadcast networks is ECUMEDIA. ECUMEDIA, initiated by, and an agency of, the Council of Churches, is composed of 12 mainline Protestant denominations, including the Southern California Board of Rabbis, and observer members from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles.³

³ ECUMEDIA is the successor to Religion in Media (RIM). RIM was the first attempt at an ecumenical mainline Protestant liaison organization (1973). However, the RIM attempt failed primarily because the member denominations lost control on the Board, leaving the way for the growth of an independent Board of Directors with a much more conservative bent. In 1978 the Council of Churches pulled away from RIM and created ECUMEDIA. (RIM remains the resource for the local program, "Today's Religion.") For a full account and analysis of the breach with RIM, see Steel.

From the 1984 Annual ECUMEDIA Report:

ECUMEDIA works to place effective Christian spokespersons, news and information, and programming in the media. We work primarily in seeking media coverage of critical events; arranging news conferences; distributing media updates, advisories, and background information to the news media; and in providing media strategy, planning and consulting to related groups which require access to media coverage. . . .⁴

In addition:

ECUMEDIA is a bridge builder organization. It was established in 1978 to build better communication between the religious groups of Southern California and the general public through more effective involvement with the various denominations.⁵

Besides being a resource to the major broadcast networks, ECUMEDIA produces news advisories, background articles and media releases on a broad range of issues relating to church and society.

ECUMEDIA monitors the media coverage of major issues, public affairs, and the sensitivity of leaders to prejudice, peace, etc. "Of special concern is the access for racial and cultural minorities, and of local community organizations and other public expressions, to print and electronic media."⁶ What is important to note, however, is that ECUMEDIA is not a preaching or teaching arm for the mainline church.

⁴ ECUMEDIA, 1984 Annual Report, Los Angeles, 1984, p. 6.

⁵ ECUMEDIA, What Is ECUMEDIA?, Los Angeles, 1985.

⁶ ECUMEDIA, 1984 Report, p. 6.

ECUMEDIA does not produce or maintain a religious program, as such, apart from a possible public service announcement. Although the importance of the service that ECUMEDIA provides cannot be denied, it would be a mistake to conclude that through ECUMEDIA mainline Protestantism finds a forceful voice on television. William Steel points out what such a voice would do:

Local congregations would be able to identify with an exciting ministry shown on television news. Non-churchgoers might become more open to examining a new style of Christian life or a theological position seldom articulated on "religious" television. A program dealing with contemporary technological or ethical concerns could encourage pastors who are struggling to combat a public image of the church which is based on the inaccurate and inadequate images currently projected throughout the television world.⁷

"Odyssey," Example of Advantage
and Limitation

To see more clearly the problem that ECUMEDIA faces in being an instrument for mainline Protestantism, we will look first at the program "Odyssey" and then at the attitudes toward religion surrounding the commercial broadcast media.

"Odyssey" is a 30-minute program offered by KNBC (Ch. 4), the NBC affiliate in Los Angeles. The producer of the program, Beth McKenzie, works closely and almost exclusively with ECUMEDIA for any religious resources she requires for the program. "Odyssey" uses a magazine format, with each segment devoted to a particular religious theme or topic.

⁷ Steel, 87.

The following is a sampling of the various topics covered on programs (May 1983-February 1984), which shows the variety and the context in which the mainline church's voice is set:

Eugene Belakon, Soviet Jewish emigrant, tells of his life as a ballet master in the USSR, and of his life now in the U.S.; interview with Art Linkletter; Row Beams, pastor, Neighborhood Christian Fellowship Glendale, and chairman of the promotion of the motion picture, "The Prodigal," tells about the unusual production; Frank Kwan (taped segment) shows clips from the "Arts of Asia"; Members of the women's coalition to stop U.S. intervention in Central America (who were prevented from holding prayer services in Honduras); Frank Kwan talks with Peter Welsh, Curator of Anthropology, about the "new look" of Southwest Museum of Artifacts for Native American Culture--explaining religious significance; Dr. W. Lowell Fairley, Executive Minister of the American Baptist Church of the Pacific Southwest, discusses the background and beliefs of that denomination; Rochel Crossman of the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women talks of the myths, statistics, and preventative measures involved in violence against women; Jerry Rubin and his wife Marissa Rothberg, standing by the Children's Tree of Life, and the events associated with the "famous religious trees" of all major religions; Pastor Ralph Torres, Youth Minister, Church on the Way (Foursquare), tells of the unusual approach of his church in ministry to teenagers; Sister Frances Sullivan, Daughters of Charity, tells about her Roman Catholic order which has celebrated its 350th anniversary; Therese Marie, Executive Director of the Gandhi Memorial International Foundation, and Yogesh K. Gandhi tell about the purpose and plans of the new organizations in Southern California; Dr. Mark Victor Hansen, motivational speaker and teacher, discusses principles of Religious Science regarding "prosperity and tithing"; Dr. Stephan H. Hoeller, Executive Director of the Gnostic Society, discusses the mystical aspects of the works of Carl Jung; B. K. Jagdish Chandler, of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, tells how his center combines science with spirituality; Dr. Havanpola Ratanasara, President, Buddhist Sangha Council of Southern

Council of Southern California, explains the purpose of chanting in the Buddhist faith; Marie Therese Furino Boni, President of the New School of Esoteric Science, tells about her beliefs which follow the traditions of the Great White Brotherhood and of her teacher Omraam Kikhael Aivanhov; Dr. Nazer Khrja, Islamic Center of Southern California, tells about Islamic calendar and observance of Ramadan.⁸

Many other samples of the subjects covered on "Odyssey" could be cited; however, at this point, it is clear that the subjects cut a wide swath in the religious spectrum. Admittedly, the above samples were selected to show the great variety of subjects covered by "Odyssey." Of the eight months of programs, however, there were less than a dozen segments dealing directly or indirectly with the mainline church's world view and religious perspective. It can readily be seen from this review of the subjects that the access to the media that the mainline church enjoys through ECUMEDIA provides little exposure for Protestant Christian beliefs. As the producer of "Odyssey," Beth McKenzie, related, "'Odyssey' is not a religious program but a program about religion."⁹ This is an important distinction to note, as the landscape of mainline television use is reviewed. Producers of religious programs do not have (nor should they necessarily have) particular loyalties to the mainline church and pursue their own objectives. "Odyssey" is far

⁸ Program selections taken from the files of "Odyssey" with permission from the producer, Beth McKenzie, researched for the period May 8, 1983 to Feb. 1984.

⁹ Beth McKenzie, interview with producer, 6 Dec. 1983.

from an "arm" of the mainline church, and maintains a relationship more out of convenience than anything else.

What becomes clear, therefore, is that many "religious" network programs, to which the mainline church has access, provide little meaningful exposure. The mainline church is only one voice in a multitude of religious segments ranging from cult groups to the bazaar.

The religious television programs that use the "round table" discussion formats might seem to fare a bit better in allowing for a mainline church voice to express itself; however, this also looks better than it is. Religion in Media (RIM) (the conservative Christian media liaison organization) provides ministerial resources for the program, "Today's Religion," broadcast on Channel 2, KCBS (CBS) television station. "Today's Religion" is a clergy panel discussion program, with audience participation in which current events and issues from a religious perspective are discussed. The panel includes Jewish, Roman Catholic, and mainline Protestant clergy. As interesting and informative as the program is, it affords little platform for a mainline church voice. On such programs clergy necessarily minimize their differences, and this most often results in opinions in which nothing particularly distinctive about religious perspectives in general, or mainline Protestant position in particular, stands out.

Network Bias

In our look at the use of television by the mainline

church, we also need to look at the attitudes of the commercial television networks that provide religious programming and PST. The networks have their own agenda, objectives and attitudes that come to the fore in their religious programming. These jointly constitute what is sometimes referred to as a "secular bias" within the broadcast media.

A study of elite occupations by Robert Lichter of George Washington University and Stanley Rothman of Smith College included the following observation:

Journalists with the most to say about what is reported by the national news media subscribe to a secular view of morality and seldom, if ever, attend religious service. . . . The researchers found that only 8 percent of the journalists go to church or synagogue weekly, and 86 percent seldom or never attend religious services. Exactly 50 percent refuse any religious affiliation, 14 percent are Jewish, one in five claims to be Protestant, and one in eight is Catholic.¹⁰

Since the relationship of the mainline church with the broadcast media is one of extreme dependence, it has little option but to "go along" with the network agenda to receive any television exposure at all. Practically speaking, this means that the networks have the major influence in setting the agenda of religious programs.

A particularly noteworthy example of network influence expressing secular bias is found in the program produced by NBC television's News Religious Program Unit, in association with the United Catholic Conference, entitled, "Women and

¹⁰ Religious News Service [New York], 15 Jan. 1982: 6.

the Catholic Church," broadcast in 1983.

The moderator was Edwin Newman, NBC correspondent. Panel members were: Fr. Joseph Fenton of the United States Catholic Conference; Cecilia Bennett, who is director of the Institute for Pastoral Ministries at Biscayne College in Florida (Miss Bennett is an expert on Canon law); Sr. Lora Ann Quinones of the Sisters of Divine Providence of San Antonio, Texas; and Abigail McCarthy, author and columnist for the Catholic publication, Commonwealth.

There are many possible approaches to the topic of women and the church. However, the network, for obvious reasons, chose to stress the current feminist critique of the church. (The feminist critique includes the charge that the church is at the heart of subjugating women by supplying the rational and cultural underpinnings for the "cultural patriarchy" of our Western society. The church does this, feminists claim, chiefly through its traditional teachings regarding the role of women, the image of God as male, and the male hierarchy governing Christian and Jewish institutions. The specific charge is that the church maintains an archaic and backward view of women and their role in society.)¹¹ Having taken this approach, the program

¹¹ For further reading on this subject see: Mary Daly, Beyond God The Father, Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation (Boston: Beacon, 1973); Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Bread Not Stone, The Challenge to Feminist Biblical Interpretation (Boston: Beacon, 1984); Rosemary Radford Reuther, Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology (Boston: Beacon, 1983).

at the outset painted a negative picture of the Catholic Church, and placed it on the defensive.

The program began with an introductory statement by Sr. Theresa Kane which included the following:

Our contemplation leads us to state that the church in its struggle to be faithful to its call for reverence and dignity for all persons must respond by providing the possibility of women as persons being included in all ministry of our church.¹²

A bit later, Mrs. McCarthy stated:

I'm a professional woman now, I was a professional woman before I was married. I've been a mother, a wife. In all those roles, I have had no real role in the church. I think what laywomen would like is equal dignity, to feel that they have equal dignity in the church and that their capacities are fully used for the church.¹³

The negative bias of the program was recognized by Sr. Quinones, and she commented:

. . . that even the title of this program, Women and The Catholic Church, sets it up as if it were two different entities. . . . I'm part of the church and the church is part of me." It's almost as if you tore them asunder from those of us who have a strong faith life; if you tore them asunder, a piece of us would be gone. So it's not that easy to separate the two. . . .¹⁴

From the start of the program, the Catholic Church was on the defensive. The inherent bias of the program was

¹² Women and the Catholic Church, TS, NBC Television News, Religious Program Unit in association with the U.S. Catholic Conference, New York, 1983, p. 1.

¹³ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

tempered a bit by the presence of Fr. Fenton, who tried to remind the panel of the complexity of the issue before them, but he, as a representative of established Catholicism, had a credibility problem and was outnumbered. He responded:

But sister . . . not all nuns would agree with your radical views either. There are a lot of nuns . . . that really feel that they would like the more traditional outlook prevailing or at least so that they can feel comfortable with what was the former general norm for sisters. I kind of feel that we're giving the impression here that what we want to see is an enormous amount of change and there are those in our society who feel that the church has changed enormously in 20 years. . . . But I wonder sometimes if we can't give the wrong picture here. . . .¹⁵

In summary, the program offered the opportunity for a deeper look into the Catholic faith, the religious orders, and the church; its spiritual richness, complexities, world view, and its commitments and the visions to which it aspires. Instead, we were treated to the prevalent and common prejudice about the Catholic Church, namely the church as archaic, hinderer of progress, and changeless monolith. There are, certainly, shortcomings and failings in the church, as in all human institutions; thus, there is always a place for criticism. But given the great misunderstanding and prejudice of many toward the Catholic Church today, the television program served only to reinforce misunderstanding. Discussion could have revolved around the Catholic understanding of Christ and the Gospel, and

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

its world view, or looked into the life and faith of the Catholic priest or nun, and thereby bringing out the special genius of the orders, of the church and its Gospel witness. The program was a good example of a secular point of view imposed upon the church by setting the agenda, parameters, and depth of the program.

There are numerous other examples of a kind of bias, and hostility even, of the broadcast media toward Christianity in general. Most notable was the CBS program "60 Minutes," which aired a segment, "The Gospel According to Whom?" on January 23, 1983. This program blatantly attacked the National and World Council of Churches. The program outraged the religious community with its biased reporting of the Council's work and unsubstantiated charges against the Council. The segment, "The Gospel According to Whom?" charged that the National and World Council of Churches USA were inappropriately involved in political activity around the world, including support of armed revolution. The presupposition was that the Council of Churches operates from political rather than Biblical and theological motives.¹⁶ Responding to the charge, the Council of Churches USA characterized the segment as proceeding "from a purely secular, political analysis of

¹⁶ National Council of Churches, The Gospel According to '60 Minutes,' Response to '60 Minutes' Segment on the Church, Jan. 23, 1983 (New York, n.d.), 1.

the churches' work . . . CBS made no attempt to probe the theological bases for the Council's work."¹⁷

The "60 Minutes" assault on the Council of Churches could be seen as an isolated case and the product of a lone producer. However, the blatant distortions and sophomoric investigation of the story by interviewing only people with radical minority opinions about the Council's work suggest a production staff with not even a rudimentary knowledge or understanding of the Protestant Church.

Certainly a complete argument for the inherent bias of the networks toward religion cannot be made here. It is, however, quite safe to talk of the different objectives and purposes of the networks which run contrary to that of the religious. (A primary example is the networks' concern for high ratings.)

A notable example of the "ratings obsession" occurred during Easter season of 1984, when ABC scheduled the mini-series, "The Thornbirds," to begin on Palm Sunday. "The Thornbirds" is about a rogue Catholic priest who breaks his vows of obedience, falls in love, commits adultery, and fathers a child without leaving the priesthood. As reported in the Los Angeles Times, the movie prompted a threatened sponsor boycott from a Christian television-monitoring group, and angered the United States Catholic Conference.

¹⁷ Ibid.

The Catholic Conference termed the timing of the mini-series "an affront to good taste and religious sensibilities."¹⁸ For ABC, the Los Angeles Times article charged, it was a matter of ratings, ". . . a program tactic by which it hoped to win the season ratings war."¹⁹ The spokesman for the Catholic Conference, Richard Hirsch, charged that ABC ". . . simply had no idea it was Holy Week. I suspect it is more a question of stupidity than of malice."²⁰

In summary, we find that the most promising opportunity for a mainline Protestant voice on television, working with the media through ecumenical organizations such as ECUMEDIA, and through network Public Service Time, in actuality provides little or no voice. The dependence of mainline denominations on the broadcast networks for air time, the differences in objectives between the networks and religious bodies, and the inherent bias of the media against the religious, means that the mainline church gets much less than it would hope.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Mainline denominations do carry on multimedia work, and have offices and staffs to maintain and create programs. The Christian Church, for example, maintains an Office of

¹⁸ "A 'Thorn' in the Church's Side," Los Angeles Times, 24 March, pt. VI: 1, col. 5.

¹⁹ Ibid, col 4.

²⁰ Ibid, col 6.

Communication where television programs and 30-second spots are developed, along with strategies for the use of cable television.

In 1969, at the Disciples of Christ General Assembly, it was resolved that communication was a continuing mission concern, and that "discriminating and effective" use of media by the church is a must. "Since that time, the Church has helped develop and has supported, through the Office of Communication, regular ecumenical network broadcast programs . . . ethical dramas on TV, denominationally-oriented newspaper ads and broadcast spot announcements, and frequent feeding of news to U.S. and Canadian news media."²¹

Since the 1969 directive from the Christian Church (Disciples) General Assembly, the Office of Communication submitted, in 1983, a ten-year, multifaceted Major Presence in Media (MPM) plan, to become operative sometime in 1988, if approved. The plan has a projected cost of \$1 million per year, \$10 million for the ten-year program. According to the MPM plan, the project would begin with \$175,000 seed money for the first two years, after which the project would generate its own resources.²² The program would be

²¹ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Office of Communication, A Description of Major Presence in Media (MPM): Its Origins, Its Theology, Its Elements, Indianapolis, n.d., p. 4.

²² Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Office of Communication, The Case In Brief for \$175,000 to Initiate a Major Presence in Media (MPM) for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Indianapolis, n.d., pp. 1-2.

administered by the Office of Communication, under the general minister and president of the Christian Church (Disciples).²³

Besides the director, there would be an Administrative Committee which would have legal authority over the program. In addition, there would also be an Advisory Committee, with representatives from the communications media. The Advisory Committee would be made up of nine persons, with a variety of media experience, including pastors and laymen. The makeup of the advisory council and Administrative Board is important to the direction, theological consistency, and theological underpinnings expressed through the programs. It needs to be noted that the requirement to have a consensus in advisory councils and administrative boards serves to stifle creativity and dilute theological consistency and objectives, as various views must be reconciled. In short, as opposed to televangelists who conceive, design, and control the theological basis and formats for their program, mainline denominations suffer because of leadership by committee, and thereby lose much creative initiative and innovation. This "democratic" element works against effective use of television, but it is not the sole nor most important factor limiting mainline use of television.

²³ Ibid., p. 1.

The scope of the MPM program is broad. The statement of purpose reads:

A Major Presence in Media (MPM) calls for use by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of television, cable, satellites, and the other media of the day to deliver messages proclaiming the Good News, to broaden the recognition of the Disciples' name, and to stimulate Disciples' self-awareness and involvement in and support of their church. There will be quality television-land and other media productions designed to reach people during times and in places where they routinely receive their information, using fully the media vehicles already in existence and capitalizing on a decentralized marketing approach so that regions and congregations can better claim ownership and reap the benefits. In keeping with Disciples style and theology, there will be no attempt to duplicate television's "Electronic Church" (emphasis added).²⁴

The MPM envisions these broad audiences: "(1) Disciples church members, (2) marginally involved Disciples, (3) inactive Christians, (4) the unchurched, and (5) those Christians with whom we have ecumenical relationships."²⁵ Further, the MPM would program for cable, video and radio. Programming would include half-hour television programs, a once-a-year, wider-appeal television special, and one-minute spots. The MPM project would "undergird" the program of the local church. In addition, 13 regional resource centers would be developed over a period of eight years.²⁶ "Emphasis

²⁴ Christian Church, Description of Major Presence, p. 1.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 13.

is placed on providing resources and training to congregations so that they can tailor MPM materials and productions to their own communities and needs."²⁷

As a summation of what MPM would not propose to do, it is informative to quote:

In proposing an MPM, Office of Communication staff has resisted the temptation to do the obvious: an expensive and flashy (but possibly viewer-scarce) "Disciples Hour" weekly on television, an attempt to elevate some Disciples preacher into a media "star," or one-shot spectacular with big names and big entertainment.²⁸

It is to be noted that there is something going on in the mainline churches to gain a television presence. MPM is an expression of that. Yet, the fact remains that mainline denominations have had little success in finding their television "voice." This is not the place to critique MPM, but it is well to note several things. MPM is an ambitious project and it remains to be seen if the "seed" money can be raised and whether the MPM program can be sustained. Unfortunately, up to this time congregations have been reluctant to support communication projects over the long term, as money spent on such projects has not brought the kind of returns that are expected. The expectations are an increase in membership and Disciples visibility. "After all," the reasoning goes, "the money spent so far in media

²⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

work has returned very little in increased membership and Disciples visibility."²⁹

More telling, however, is the MPM decision not to "attempt to duplicate television's 'Electronic Church,' or attempt to elevate some Disciples preacher into a media 'star.'" The motives behind such a position are noble enough--to guard against falling into the same questionable ethical practices (the hawking of Jesus), and creating "media stars" and personality cults. On the other hand, some elements of the Electronic Church are important to follow, most notably the preaching and teaching elements. The position of no duplication of the Electronic Church needs to be more creatively defined by the Christian Church.

United Methodist

The most ambitious program for television use comes from the United Methodist Church. In 1984, the General Conference appropriated \$3.9 million to be spent developing a media presence and the programming that goes with it, through their UM Communications office. Among the goals of the UM Communications are: helping local Methodist Churches "tell their stories," investigating the feasibility of a prime time nationally-televised United Methodist special, and researching the feasibility of a

²⁹ Steve Jackson, interview, 5 Oct. 1983. (Jackson is Director, Interfaith Media Center, School of Theology at Claremont, CA.)

national television satellite network.³⁰

The United Methodist approach to television media reflects the approach all mainline denominations are taking. Factor in the difference in money allocated and you have a fundamentally similar approach to television use. The Methodists are moving to "narrow casting" with the use of cable. They also have Communication Packets to help local churches use local television. The packets consist of print ads, radio spots and television spots. The future plans for United Methodist Communications as stated are:

1. A national satellite television network for all the conferences and general agencies, with weekly broadcast and teleconferences. Districts and local churches could join in too.
2. A coordinated public relations program for the entire church, to build a true image of United Methodism's strengths and contributions, using secular and in-church media.
3. Increased visibility and presence for United Methodism on television and radio, capitalizing on the success of local churches already doing this effectively.
4. A national television special focused on United Methodism's aid to children around the world.³¹

It is appropriate to take a sampling of the United Methodist Communications programs for the 1982-1984 year.

³⁰ United Methodist Church, Office of Public Publication, United Methodist Communications Annual Report, Helping the Church Tell Its Story in 1984 (Nashville: UM Communications, 1984), 3.

³¹ Ibid.

(A complete listing of Methodist media projects is found in Appendix B.)

"A Lost History," television special on the contributions of women in 200 years of Methodist history.

"The Great American Feast," (radio) production consultation and marketing for ecumenical Thanksgiving special.

"Christmas Eve Special," hour-long Christmas Eve service from Lovely Lane Church, Baltimore, Maryland.

"General Conference Newsfeeds," produced nine television news clips and 25 annual conference clips at General Conference and filled individual stations' requests.

"Growing Through Grief," (video), six-part series on coping with grief.

"Theology and the Relational Vision," (video), eight-part series on process theology.

"A Parable and 20th Century Ministry," (video), four programs examining the parable of "The Rich Man and Lazarus" from four perspectives.

"Impact Religion," (radio), produced three programs of Impact: NBC radio talk show.³²

Programs Produced by Mainline Protestant Denominations

The Presbyterians, United Methodists, American Lutherans, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and United Church of Christ all produce a variety of programs for commercial and cable television. They produce single programs, seasonal specials, limited mini-series, and 30-second "spots." The programs produced, however, are few and limited. A few examples of the programs produced by

³² Ibid., pp. 14-17.

the denominations are appropriate here (as listed):

"Video One" the flagship program of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Now in its fifth year, the half-hour program uses a magazine format to present three or four segments on timely topics of general interest to Presbyterians and the religious community. Subjects include human interest stories, religious news (both denominational and ecumenical), interviews, and stories intended to interest and inform Presbyterians and others about the work of the church in the world.

"Catch the Spirit" (weekly 30:00-minute programs), produced by the United Methodists; magazine format. A fast-paced magazine which gives the nation a look at the work and faith of the United Methodists in all their cultural, racial, ethnic, and geographical diversity. Program includes "Religion in the News," "Worth Considering," and "As I See It."

"Begin with Goodbye" mini-series (six 28:00-minute programs), produced by United Methodists. This six-part series deals with personal loss, separation, and new beginnings.

"Reflections-Images of Christ" (five 30:00-minute programs), produced by the American Lutheran Church. Five-part series exploring images of Christ as reflected in the life and witness of individual Lutherans and Lutheran congregations.

"Reflections-Waterlife" (five 30:00-minute programs), produced by the American Lutheran Church. Five-part series of meditations on the meaning of baptism, told through life stories, songs and sermons.

"Yeshua" (five 60:00-minute programs), produced by the American Lutheran Church. Five-hour series documentary moving through 2,000 years of history, from Abraham to the birth and life of Jesus.

"Davey and Goliath" (sixty 15:00-minute programs), produced by the Lutheran Church in America. Animated children's series about a boy and his talking dog who discover moral lessons relevant to everyday life through their adventures.

"Perspectives" (seventy 30:00-minute programs), produced by ecumenical consortium of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church, and the Lutheran Church in America. A "Meet the Press" type program featuring noteworthy

guests addressing various subjects, e.g., Jimmy Carter discussing prospects for world peace; Betty Fridan on women's rights.

"This is the Life" (weekly 28:50-minute program), Spanish title: **"Esta Es La Vida,"** produced by Lutheran Television. A weekly series of dramatic anthologies. Each episode deals with personal crises, moments of indecision, and problems of life today.

Single Programs (examples of)

"Bread in the Desert" (27:40 minutes), produced by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Documentary of success stories of churches which feed the hungry, in the rural and urban settings throughout the U.S.

"Now and Here, My Hand: A Genesis of Christian Unity" (28:00 minutes), produced by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The history of the Christian Church (Disciples) is depicted in this docudrama.

"From the Word Go" (30:00 minutes), produced by United Methodist Communications. This magazine format program gives a variety of glimpses into the history and tradition of the United Methodist Church.

"There's More to Me Than What You See" (30:00 minutes), produced by the American Lutheran Church. Explores the life, thoughts and feelings of three people who are living with permanent disability.³³

Conclusion

It is found that, even with all the television media activity, the mainline church has no consistent or dependable voice on television. Protestant leadership and teachings are invisible and nonexistent. The attempt to gain a television presence, although a noble one, remains crippled by an overdependence on commercial network PST or

³³ Religious Television Program Directory, National Council of Churches, Communication Commission (New York: NCC, 1986): 3-36.

on network production of religious programs on which the mainline church "piggybacks." This, although advantageous for the networks, does almost nothing for the mainline church cause. Ecumenical organizations providing liaison with the networks do not fare much better as vehicles for mainline television ministry, since they have little influence on the content and focus of commercial network religious programming. The conclusion regarding mainline use of the television media is a disheartening one.

William Steel writes:

The logic and passion of the free pulpit of Protestantism is missing from television. The proclamations of liberation and forgiveness, of grace and compassion, find no place on the airwaves. There are no words of judgment, no quest for the meaning, no ethical demands or insights, and nothing to contradict the theological illiteracy so widespread in televisionland.³⁴

What stands out from this review of mainline use of television, and the content of their programming, is the lack of salvific teaching, faith statement and Biblical teaching in the programming. More specifically, what is it that the mainline church deems of ultimate concern for the individual? What is the message that burns in the soul of the church that the church wants to teach? How are the Scriptures, the Gospel, and Christ understood? And how does that understanding shape and inform the lives of individuals? As we have seen, the programs that are

³⁴ Steel, 50-51.

produced are interesting and informative enough (i.e., "A Lost History," "Growing Through Grief," etc.), but the overall theological or salvific message of the programs is nebulous and uninforming at best. The mainline denominations in general have chosen not to duplicate the televangelists, which has meant an avoidance of preaching and teaching as a focal point in their religious programming. In the place of preaching and teaching, the United Methodist and Christian Church (Disciples) have elevated the highly ambiguous "to tell the story of the church" as a primary goal of their religious programming.³⁵

Telling the church's story says marvelously little of the salvific message of the church. What it does say is highly academic and uninvolved. The same ambiguity regarding the preaching and teaching dimension of the church characterizes the Presbyterians, and the Lutherans as well. The Presbyterian Church produces a half-hour program using a magazine format called "Video One," whose subjects include human interest stories, religious news, interviews, etc., but no preaching. The Lutherans fare little better than their long-running "Lutheran Hour," which boasts acclaimed dramas but, again, nothing about why it is important for a listener to become Lutheran.

It is the ambiguity of the message within mainline religious programming that provides the answer to the

³⁵ United Methodist Church, Communications Report, 3.

question this paper asks. It is the key to our investigation. For without a clarity of message, without a clarity of doctrine or belief to transmit, the "ship is rudderless," all the activity of the movement leads nowhere; support for the movement is difficult to find; and the movement wanes.

In the next chapter we take a closer look at the ambiguity of the message in the mainline church, and its relationship to the church's silence on television.

CHAPTER 4

The Church With Nothing to Say

In the process of this study, I came across a full-page ad in the Los Angeles Times placed by a religious organization called The Word of Truth Ministry.¹ The title of the ad was "The Order of Events," and the text laid out a chronological history of the world. This history is believed to be progressing to the second coming of Christ, the 1000-year millennium, the mass resurrection of the dead and world history culminating in a new heaven and new earth (see Appendix C). A full-page ad in the Los Angeles Times for a non-profit organization costs in excess of \$15,500. The ad was the fourth in a series of four, meaning that the Word of Truth Ministry invested more than \$62,000 on the newspaper ad campaign.

The question that immediately came to mind was, what does the mainline church believe to be the single most important teaching for the salvation of the individual or humankind that would motivate such a sacrifice and investment, be it for newspaper ads or television?

Loss of Missionary Zeal

The investigation thus far has established how little

¹ "The Order of Events," Los Angeles Times, 19 Jan. 1985, pt. II: 5, col. 1.

the mainline church has been able to use television, and the relative ineffectiveness of its present attempts.

What is also suggested is that much of the difficulty with the mainline church's inability to establish a television presence is due to the church's having an uncertainty about its salvific message. This uncertainty also expresses itself in the current declining membership. To an assessment of this we now turn.

Much is being written today about the decline of the mainline church. This decline is most measurable by the statistics which recount the loss of membership, but it is also shown in a lack of vitality or zeal. A central characteristic of all vital movements is that they have a message that they believe to be salvific; and believe it with an urgency. In a Los Angeles Times article on the phenomenal growth of the Worldwide Church of God, and the popularity of its founder, Herbert W. Armstrong, the press secretary for the Worldwide Church of God was quoted to say:

"Mr. Armstrong's religious message is who and what God is, who and what Satan is, the purpose of human life, why civilization as we know it exists and why it is in the condition it is, the truth about Judah and Israel (prophecy about Bible lands), the purpose of the church, and the hope of the kingdom of God". . . .²

It is the clarity of Armstrong's answers to such questions that promotes "missionary zeal" and evangelism.

² "The Armstrongs and Their Churches-Thriving on Controversy," Los Angeles Times, 12 Jan. 1985, pt. II: 3, col 2.

"Missionary zeal" is a central characteristic of the televangelists. Their preaching is with conviction, and they feel compelled to announce the truth as they see it. The emergence and growth of religious sect groups provides a case in point.

A most notable addition to the American religious landscape is the emergence and growth of the quasi-religious sect known as Scientology. In the 30 years since its beginning, the sect has grown to more than 600 "churches" and has churches and missions in more than 30 countries around the globe (Europe, Australia, Korea, Mexico). They claim 60 new churches and 130 new missions in the past five years alone. The number of "active" Scientology members in 1984 increased by 40.2 percent over the 1983 total.³ Though accurate figures for the group are difficult to secure, a 1978 article cites a worldwide membership of 3 million, with an estimated annual income of \$1 billion in the U.S. alone.⁴

Scientology is a mixture of Hinduism, Buddhism, Eastern philosophy and metaphysics. The goal of Scientology is the "freeing of the soul by wisdom." Each preclear (initiate) "is really a Thetan (immortal spirit) who has forgotten he

³ Scientology, What is It? (Los Angeles: Scientology, 1985), p. 8.

⁴ John Weldon, "A Sampling of The New Religions, Four Groups Described," International Review of Mission 67 (Oct. 1978): 420.

is immortal and forgotten he is a Thetan." Because they have forgotten, Thetans are bound to matter, energy, space, and time. "Each time a body dies, the Thetan must enter another body. . . . Thetans thus are no longer free but are in bondage to the universe."⁵ Through the disciplines of Scientology, each person can become a free Thetan and gain back full control over the universe (matter, energy, time, and space). Part of the discipline includes the examination of one's past lives which is uncovered through a process called auditing.

Regardless of how sound or acceptable the teachings might be, the phenomenal growth of Scientology is due to an aggressive evangelism, which is motivated by the conviction that Scientologists have the "truth" and that it is salvific for the individual. In a statement of what Scientology stands for we read:

A civilization without insanity, without criminals and without war, where the able can prosper and honest beings can have right, and where man is free to rise to greater heights, are the aims of Scientology.

Non-political in nature, Scientology welcomes any individual of any creed, race or nation.

We seek no revolution. We seek only evolution to higher states of being for the individual and society.⁶

Scientology, like other vigorous groups, has its literature filled with happy smiling faces with testimony

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Scientology, p. 6.

as to how lives have been improved through its techniques. Scientology is so financially strong that it can afford, periodically, to place slick multi-colored 20-page advertising supplements in the Sunday Los Angeles Times. The cost for such a supplement runs into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

It is now worth asking how willing we are as mainline Protestants to take the measures many sect and televangelist groups take? How willing are we to sell church literature on city street corners, evangelize door-to-door like the Jehovah's Witnesses, or set ourselves apart from the norm by special attire? What is the depth of mainline church faith convictions?

Dean Kelly sets "missionary zeal" as one of the major factors underlying church vitality in his classic work, Why Conservative Churches are Growing. The factors he lists are:

Commitment (willingness to sacrifice status, possessions, safety, life itself for the cause . . . a total demand, group solidarity and identification); **Discipline** (willingness to obey the commands of leadership without question and willingness to suffer sanctions for infraction rather than leave the group); and **Missionary Zeal** (an eagerness to tell the Good News to others . . . A virtual flood of outgoing communications would be matched by a high degree of reverberance within).⁷

The willingness to spread the "Word"--missionary zeal--also expresses itself through practical teachings and other

⁷ Dean Kelly, Why Conservative Churches are Growing (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 58.

requirements. For example, in a Jehovah's Witnesses article on marriage and family we read:

Far more critical is whether a couple is willing to accept God's standards for marriage and apply the Bible's principles or not. Consider just a few of the things the Bible says about the roles and responsibilities of husbands and wives: 'Let wives be in subjection to their husbands as to the Lord,' Ephesians 5:22,23.

"Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it . . . , husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies," Ephesians 5:25,28.

When these principles are put to work, a solid basis for marital communications is laid. Why, because a husband who views 'loving his wife' as a God-given responsibility will be more inclined to talk to her and listen to her. A wife who believes that obedience to her husband is a divine requirement will be similarly motivated.⁸

Whether we agree or not with the above lesson, the question here is, what are mainline Protestant teachings about marriage and love? What is believed to be necessary for maintaining a happy home and a lasting relationship? It is my observation that in the mainline church today there is no consensus. It is my experience that the mainline church has great difficulty with defining what values to teach and exemplify.

For example, most mainline church parents today have adopted the practice of not requiring their children to attend church once the child has reached the point of protesting or complaining about going to church (usually

⁸ "Family Communication, How Can It Be Improved," Awake! (8 Jan. 1985): 5.

early adolescence). On the surface, this seems a practice sensitive to the child, but on a deeper level it expresses the parental attitude that what happens at church is not all that important for the child's development. This is in firm contrast, for example, to the approach of the Seventh-Day Adventists:

For little Adventists, subcultural patterns are created and reinforced by the extensive SDA educational system. Six-year-olds act out eschatological dramas and 12-year-olds memorize proof texts along with other children who eat, drink, play, read, dress, worship, and witness very much as they do themselves. By the time an Adventist student graduates from academy (high school), he has piled up over 1,500 hours of formal religious instruction, not counting church time.⁹

Vital organizations are characterized, as well, by the commitments and sacrifices members give to the organization. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (the Mormons) is a case in point:

. . . not only do Mormons abstain from coffee, tea, and other stimulants, engage in extensive Temple-related rituals, and contribute substantially to the religious and welfare programs of the church, but every young man who aspires to the upper priesthood . . . must devote two years to full-time missionary activity at his own expense. . . .¹⁰

Such demands and commitments are not "imposed" by the organization. Such commitments are willingly accepted by new members, because such requirements grow out of, and are

⁹ Joan Craven, "The Wall of Adventism," Christianity Today 28 (19 Oct. 1984): 23.

¹⁰ Kelly, 53-54.

a part of, the salvific process as understood by the membership.

Again, the same elements are seen in Jewish and Catholic movements. Recall here the educational programs (Hebrew Schools and Catholic Schools), as well as dietary requirements of the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox Jewish traditions. This is a far cry from the current state of affairs in mainline Protestant denominations. As Kelly writes:

Those who are accustomed to the placid and circumspect ways of the mainline Protestant denominations in America today may not think of religion as a strenuous and fateful adventure, catching up human lives in a surge of significance and purpose, changing the very definition of what it is to be a person worthy of respect, and thus shifting upward a whole society's expectations of human behavior. But religion has often been this kind of movement in the past and will be in the future.¹¹

So the quality that enables religious meanings to take hold is not their rationality, their logic, their surface credibility, but rather the demand they make upon their adherents and the degree to which that demand is met by commitment.¹²

Religious commitment grows out of a message that is perceived as salvific. The disciple believes life's meaning is enhanced by adopting the standards and rituals of the group. Thus, members feel compelled to participate, study, give their children over to the mores and teaching of the

¹¹ Kelly, 56.

¹² Ibid., p. 53.

group, evangelize, and give of their time and money. Participation is invigorating and inspires self-sacrifice. (There are of course other motives for group participation. It provides a social base, sense of belonging, a sense of participation, etc.)

It appears that the message of the necessity of Christ "for life" has been lost from the contemporary mainline Protestant movement. In John 6:35 we read that Jesus is the bread of life. This means that Christ is as essential for living as the bread we eat. The regenerative questions that need to be clearly answered by the mainline church today are: In what way is Jesus the bread of life; how does Jesus enhance and invigorate my own life; how is He salvific; and what demands does this place upon me?

Loss of Membership (Statistics)

Statistics on membership of the mainline denominations show a steady and dramatic loss from the 1960s. This is evidence that the mainline church is in difficulty.

At least ten of the largest Christian denominations in the country whose memberships totaled 77,666,223 in 1967 had fewer members the next year and fewer yet the year after. Most of these denominations had been growing uninterruptedly since colonial times. In the previous decade they had grown more slowly, some failing to keep pace with the increase in the nation's populations. And now they have begun to diminish, reversing a trend of two centuries.¹³

. . . the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church, the United Presbyterian Church in the

¹³ Ibid., p. 1.

USA, the Lutheran Church in America, and the United Church of Christ. All five show a significant decline in the latter half of the decade. . . .¹⁴

The Methodist Church lost 1.5 million members in the last 15 years.¹⁵ The Christian Church (Disciples) reported a membership decline of 30 percent in the last 21 years, and a net loss in 4,301 congregations, 11.3 percent in the last 10 years.¹⁶ Since 1970, the Episcopal Church and United Presbyterian Church each lost roughly 5 million members.¹⁷

The Los Angeles Times reported on figures compiled by Harvard University's William Hutchison and reported at the conference, "Does Liberal Protestantism Have an American Future?" (In the article, mention was also made of a similar study by McKinney.) Their conclusion:

If long-term trends continue, the once-dominant liberal and moderate denominations will soon become a minority in American Protestantism.

Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, and like congregations came to be called 'mainline churches' this century because they not only attracted educated, middle class people, but also represented the great majority of U.S. Protestants.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁵ Edmond Robb, Jr., "American Methodism at 200--The Cost for Hope," Christianity Today 28 (Nov. 1984): 21.

¹⁶ Richard Romand, [President, National Evangelistic Association, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)], Letter to Christian Churches (Disciples), Lubbock, TX, 7 April 1986.

¹⁷ "Evangelism's Revival in the Mainline Denominations," Christianity Today 24 (25 Jan. 1980): 44.

In 1920 mainline bodies constituted 76% of America's Protestant population, but by last year [1984] that figure had fallen to 53%. . . .

They did agree that the churches are suffering from aging membership, relatively few young adults . . . and lack of a stirring message . . . 'Liberal Protestantism' seems to have run out of ideas. . . .

McKinney's study, with sociologist Wade Clark Roof of the University of Massachusetts, found that among Americans below age 45, the conservative churches lose only 5.6% of their members to "secular society," while liberal denominations lose between 9% and 12% to the unaffiliated ranks.¹⁸

Decline of Interest in the Bible

In regard to the decline of Protestantism, it is well to look at the status of Scripture in mainline Protestantism. Scripture serves as the primary authority of Christian movements, and thus is a good gauge to measure the vitality of the movement. James Smart writes:

The voice of the Scriptures is falling silent in the preaching and teaching of the church and in the consciousness of Christian people, a silence that is perceptible even among those who are most insistent upon their devotion to the Scriptures.¹⁹

The seriousness of the situation is that the fading of the Scriptures from the consciousness of the church weakens and then ruptures the continuity of the church of today with the church in which it had its origin, so that it no longer remembers the word that called it into being or the purpose that alone justifies its existence . . . let the Scriptures cease to be heard and soon the remembered Christ becomes an imagined

¹⁸ "Mainline Church Strength Shrinks," Los Angeles Times, 6 April 1985, pt. 1A: 1, col. 5.

¹⁹ James Smart, The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church Today, A Study in Hermeneutics (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 15-16.

Christ, shaped by the religiosity and the unconscious desire of worshipers.²⁰

A pastor of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) writes:

Even though the young people I have encountered recently have been as healthy and bright a group as one might find anywhere, my experience in teaching the pastor's class on church membership has been an exercise in frustration. Many youngsters don't know the Old from the New Testament, cannot locate a single book, let alone a story, don't have the slightest notion of basic Biblical themes and assume that the whole thing floated down from heaven in one year. It is not that Sunday school has given them such bad information; they just haven't been in Sunday school that much. And when they have been present, Bible study has not been the primary agenda.

. . . I am ready to throw up my hands. We cannot expect to do in eight weeks what we haven't done in the previous decade.²¹

A Gallup poll was commissioned in 1980 by the periodical, Christianity Today, to measure the place of the Bible in the life of Christians and the general public. The data was given to a group of leading experts on religious life for evaluation who drew disturbing conclusions. The general conclusion was that the Bible is fading from use in mainline Christian communities. It is valuable to quote from that study, James Boice concludes:

. . . we are discouraged to see how few actually turn to the Bible . . . and how little they know of it. It is apparently one thing to believe that the Bible is God's word and quite another to read it.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

²¹ Charles Bayer, "Biblical Teaching Still Main Task," The Disciple, April 1985: 43.

We are also troubled that both those who are younger and those who are more educated tend not to read the Bible very frequently. Only 14 percent of those with a college background and 6 percent of the 18 to 29-year-olds reported reading the Bible daily or more. It is also troubling that 56 percent of college educated and 58 percent of the 18 to 29-year-olds read it less than once a month or never. . . .²²

The conclusion drawn by R. C. Sproul:

The bottom line is that we have a populace who, for the most part, are uneducated about the content of the Scriptures, and particularly with respect to the ethical mandates of Scriptures. . . .

The church's most serious problem is that people both outside and inside the church do not really know who God is and what he requires of us.²³

Authors on the cutting edge of theology are also making observations about the contemporary decline and lethargy of the mainline church. Indeed, Kelly focuses on the need for mainline churches to find effective ways to make the Scriptures and faith relevant today. He writes:

The churches cannot fulfill their proper function until they find and effectuate ways for their members to talk about the meaning of life, to explore it in a climate of mutual confidence and support, to try out together how to celebrate, embody, and proclaim the 'explanations' they believe make life worth living.²⁴

In a very powerful insight he writes:

The churches in their present plight cannot look to their members for disciplined adherence to any

²² Walter Elwell, "Belief and the Bible: A Crisis of Authority?" Christianity Today 24 (21 March 1980): 22.

²³ Ibid., p. 23.

²⁴ Kelly, 138.

particular role or meaning, so they are drawn to another option: to proclaim the meaning which the faithful ought to see in the social situation, to define the situation in such a way that the membership will recognize their duty and do it, to lift up a lofty standard in the hope that members will rally around it. That is the option which many church leaders have chosen today, but it has not worked out quite as intended. Instead of rallying the faithful round the flag, these leaders have found themselves at a greater and greater distance from their ostensible followers, waving the flag more frantically as the gap has widened. . . . The situation is a by-product of the general attenuation of meaning in the major churches. . . .²⁵

The Contemporary Cultural Context

The reasons for the decline in mainline Protestantism, its lack of vitality and paralysis, is a subject to which religious scholars and theologians have dedicated volumes. A detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this essay, but a few words are necessary.

The Protestant Church, in the contemporary age, is confronted with a different set of presuppositions and attitudes about the world, how the person views him or herself and his/her place in the world and God. Views and concerns which are different than traditional Protestant teachings. In short, a grave discontinuity exists between the concerns and needs of individuals in the culture at large, and those that the church addresses. In his book, Christianity and The New Age, Christopher Dawson writes:

For centuries a civilization will follow the same path, worshiping the same gods, cherishing the

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 145-146.

same ideals, acknowledging the same moral and intellectual standards. And then all at once a change will come, the springs of the old life run dry, and men suddenly awake to a new world, in which the ruling principles of the former age seem to lose their validity and to become inapplicable or meaningless.²⁶

Secularism

This "new" context or set of assumptions shaping and defining the experiences of Western people today is discussed under the categories of either secularism, modernism, or humanism. Of secularism and its hold on Western culture, Langdon Gilkey writes:

Secularity is in the air today, even as it was in the autumn air of Rome when I was there at the last session of the Council. And as many rather wild-eyed theologians have recently pointed out, accurately and so uncomfortably, this is the air that theologians breathe along with everyone else. We cannot breathe our own "religious" air, and if we speak as if we do then what we say is unreal, to the man in the street . . . to ourselves as well.²⁷

Secularism consists of a matrix of attitudes and pre-suppositions almost completely opposite to those of religious pursuits upon which the traditional religious institutions are built. The religious looks to, and tries to speak from, a sensitivity to a transcendent reality which impinges upon the daily lives of all men and women.

²⁶ Christopher Dawson, Christianity and The New Age (London: Sheed & Ward, 1931), 9.

²⁷ Langdon Gilkey, "Unbelief and The Secular Spirit," The Presence and Absence of God, ed. C. F. Mooney (New York: Fordham University Press, 1969), 50.

Secularism looks only to the individual and his or her experiences, denying a transcendent reality (God) and the need to consider it or attempt to live in harmony with its dictates. "'The secular' means simply belonging to 'the age' or 'the world,' and defined as a 'this-world-is-all-there-is-ism.'"²⁸ Summing up this attitudinal "cultural matrix," Dawson writes:

The Western mind has turned away from the contemplation of the absolute and eternal to the knowledge of the particular and the contingent. It has made man the measure of all things and has sought to emancipate human life from its dependence on the supernatural. Instead of the whole intellectual and social order being subordinated to spiritual principles, every activity has declared its independence, and we see politics, economics, science, and art organizing themselves as autonomous kingdoms which owe no allegiance to any higher power.²⁹

The primary force that gave rise to this "new age" was the success of science since the 16th century, with its phenomenal advancements in medicine and technology upgrading the quality and promise of everyday human life. Science became rooted within the human psyche as holding the promise for greater achievements in the quality of human life. Consequently, the Orthodox religious dogmas and doctrines, together with the questions they addressed, simply became less and less relevant and credible.

²⁸ Albert T. Mullegen, Christianity and Modern Man-The Crisis of Secularism (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1961), 13.

²⁹ Dawson, 66-67.

The success of science refocused human inquiry and confidence to humankind itself, to its capabilities and potentials for creating a better world. It focused attention on living a full life in the here and now, and faith in humankind. The success of science changed perceptions and beliefs about the individual, the individual's place in the world, and God. As Harry Emerson Fosdick put it:

Man was blowing on his hands and doing such things at such a rate as never had been done or dreamed on earth before. Man was pioneering new truth and building a new social order. . . . So the temptation was to relegate God to an advisory capacity, a kind of chairman of the board of sponsors of our highly successful human enterprise.³⁰

More specifically, the attitudes that make up today's cultural matrix for the mainstream of Americans are: 1) a belief that truth comes from science. ("It is now the social sciences and the psychological disciplines that tell us what creatures we are and what we are about on this planet");³¹ 2) a faith in man and in human endeavors without appeal to the supernatural or transcendent reality; 3) an undaunted faith in the capacity of human reason as the quality for attaining truth (denying the validity of revelational ("feeling") knowledge); 4) a belief in the continued progress of human advancement in the quality of

³⁰ Harry Emerson Fosdick, "Beyond Modernism," Christian Century 52 (4 Nov. 1935): 1551.

³¹ Robert N. Bellah, "The Triumph of Secularism," Religion and Intellectual Life 2 (Winter 1984): 24.

life (consequently an emphasis on the importance of life in the here and now); and 5) the rooting of authority in the individual with regard to the question of what is best for him, which encourages ethical relativism. Consequently, religion becomes restricted to the purely private sphere where it is "considered merely one of a variety of possible private options."³² In addition, institutional religion is no longer seen as the bearer of public truth; so, the traditional authority of the church becomes inconsequential or only marginally considered.³³

Beliefs in a vindictive God who condemns some to everlasting punishment for failure to agree in detail with exact rules of a religious group falls by the wayside. Indeed, there is a skepticism about any rewards and punishments in an afterlife, or even about an afterlife at all.³⁴ Robert Bellah writes: "In the cultural sphere, religion has changed from being . . . the central organizing structure of our intellectual life to something rather marginal or peripheral. . . ."³⁵ It is this change in perceptions and attitudes that challenges the mainline church today.

³² Ibid., p. 19.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ John B. Cobb, Jr., Varieties of Protestantism (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 151.

³⁵ Bellah, p. 14.

Mainline Church Discontinuity

As the mainline church that fails to speak out of, and to, the modern cultural matrix of attitudes and presuppositions, it is a church that is irrelevant or a church with, as I've termed it, "nothing to say." John Cobb writes, of the mainline church today:

Much of what is put forward today as Christianity is irrelevant to the actual needs of men. Old creeds and dogmas once vibrant with life are today remote and empty of real significance. . . .

Today . . . the doctrines are not disproved; they have suffered a far worse fate. They have become mere speculations, impractical concerns for idle minds. They are not disbelieved; they are simply ignored.³⁶

Jim Wallis charges liberal Protestantism (much of which runs through mainline Protestantism), with becoming "Establishment" Christianity:

Establishment Christianity is a religion of accommodation and conformity, which values realism and success more than faithfulness and obedience. It is heavily invested in the political order, the social consensus, and the ideology of the economic system. Its leaders are more comfortable as chaplains than as prophets; its proclamation has been rendered harmless and inoffensive to the wealthy and powerful; and its churchly life has become a mere ecclesiastical reproduction of the values and assumptions of the surrounding environment.³⁷

Thomas Ogletree writes of the contrast between the theology of a few decades earlier and the present time:

³⁶ Cobb, Varieties, 150.

³⁷ Jim Wallis, Agenda for a Biblical People, A New Focus for Developing a Life-Style of Discipleship (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 1-2.

[then] . . . theology focused on the finitude of man and the anxiety states which disclosed man's awareness of his limits. It highlighted the possibilities the Gospel offers for helping men deal creatively and courageously with their limits. In contrast, the newer thrusts in theology are increasingly concentrated on the meaning of man's power and his consequent responsibility for shaping his own life and the life of the world What is being suggested is that a fundamental reordering of the basic themes of Christian faith is now required if we are to respond appropriately to the new situation of man.³⁸

Conclusion

The question looms large. What does the mainline church have to say that is salvific for individuals and the world today? A look at the continuing loss of members in the mainline churches, the decline in the interest, and knowledge of the Scriptures among the laity, the slowness of the church to effectively respond to the matrix of secular values, to which it remains subjugated, bespeaks of the institutional mainline Protestant church as antiquated, with the irrelevancy and lack of vitality that characterizes such a state. It is a church with "nothing to say" (salvific) that will capture the minds and inspire the hearts. It is a church that lacks the ability to inspire and generate excitement and purpose among its members. Indeed, as the statistics show, millions find it irrelevant.

³⁸ Thomas W. Ogletree, "From Anxiety to Responsibility: The Shifting Focus of Theological Reflection," New Theology No. 6, eds. Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman (London: MacMillan, 1969), 38-39.

The fact, therefore, that the mainline denominational voice is not to be heard on television in any significant way is a symptom expressing the general malady of a church in decline.

When I first began the investigation into the lack of mainline presence in the media, I thought that it might be due to a general inattention to the kinds of programming available that "gets the word out" or from general lack of television expertise available to the mainline church, or due to denominational communication departments overrun by technocrats, with the experience necessary for "running the machinery," but without theological sophistication. I thought it might be a product of a burdensome bureaucracy which inadvertently blocked the creative process. However, what I discovered in the course of this study was something more fundamental. The answer became apparent by the severity of the lack of the mainline presence on television, by the loss of membership, by the inability of the mainline church to respond to the almost total co-opting by the televangelists of traditional Christian church symbols, and Scripture. All such factors are characteristic of a church uncertain about its identity and beliefs.

On the other hand, a church with something to say, confident regarding its message (however ill-founded the message), will attract members, support and funds. This is exemplified time and time again by the growth of sect

groups such as Scientology, and the relatively new Teri Cole-Whittaker ministries (a Church of Religious Science derivative which teaches that salvation comes by recognizing the "divine" within each person and that the way to make it available is by recognizing this fact and by positive thinking); to that of Robert Schuller's mix of Christ, psychology, and self-esteem. Kenneth Kantzer and Paul Fromer write of Schuller's "Gospel":

Robert Schuller's logic is as clear as his Crystal Cathedral. . . . Tell people God loves them. They are important to him. They are, in fact, of infinite value. In Jesus Christ, God has come down to meet us. So turn to him, have faith in God, and you will find in his nonjudgmental, accepting love a sense of your own self-worth. You will be somebody!³⁹

Looking at popular televangelists, we see the quality of zealousness about their message.

In conclusion, the answer to the question we began with is that the inability of the mainline Protestant denominations to effectively use the television media or mount their own television ministry is a symptom of a fundamental malady inherent within the very spirit of Protestantism today. This malady can be defined as a crisis of confidence as to the value of its traditional understanding of the Gospel and its salvific message. This lack of confidence manifests itself in an ambiguity about the message it does promote and a lack of decisiveness and zeal about that message. It is

³⁹ Kenneth Kantzer and Paul Fromer, "A Theologian Looks at Schuller," Christianity Today 28 (10 Aug. 1984): 23.

manifested as well in the inability of the mainline church to make the Gospel message more relevant to the changed presuppositions of modern men and women and, for our purposes here, in the inability to inspire its members to support and sustain a television ministry. Thus, the mainline Protestant voice on television will remain muted and ineffectual. There are, however, vast resources within the mainline Protestant movement for renewal and creating and maintaining a television ministry. To that we now turn.

CHAPTER 5

The Church with Something to Say

As we have seen, the mainline denominations are unable to make significant use of television, because they remain ambiguous and tentative about the salvific message they wish to impart (i.e., their understanding of the Gospel). This lack of confidence in its message has arisen in large measure because of the secular contemporary cultural milieu that engulfs individuals. Caught "off guard," the church has not yet learned how to speak out of its faith to the new perceptions and attitudes of modern secular society. As John Cobb recounts:

The concrete life of the church largely reflects the society and culture of which it is a part. Traditional images and doctrines are retained and used for limited purposes. These images and doctrines seem to belong to a world that is remote from the popular culture expressed in most of the church's life and the cutting edge of creative thought.¹

A further complication that hinders the church today, it has been suggested, is that the mainline church has become an "establishment" church, thereby offering no prophetic or positive alternative to the "ways of the world." As Jim Wallis writes:

¹ John B. Cobb, Jr., "Can The Church Think Again?," Occasional Papers [United Methodist Church, Board of Education and Ministry] 1, no. 12, 9 Aug. 1976, 4.

Our churches are now, in most every instance, bearing the marks of a paralyzing conformity to the world that has crippled our life and our witness. We have adopted the structure and values of a large corporation in our organizational patterns. Having become like other institutions and bureaucracies, we employ the same techniques and methods. The ordinary social values are reproduced rather than reversed in the churches, and we have substituted a captive civil religion for the clear proclamation of the Word of God.²

The mainline church, having adopted much of the secular world view, loses its unique message and with it the inspiration and loyalties and evangelistic zeal that its message should inspire. As I have characterized it, it is a "church with nothing to say."

Mainline Protestant Church Potential for Television Use

At first brush the above analysis could lead to a pessimistic conclusion regarding the future of the mainline church and its future use of television. However, the jury is very much out as yet. John Cobb writes:

The cultural and scientific revolutions that have done so much for us in other realms, instead of destroying religion, have freed Christianity from the shackles of medieval superstition. Only now for the first time can we see clearly the real meaning of the Scriptures, the true significance of Jesus' message for our lives.

The abandonment of emphasis upon another world is not, therefore, a retreat from Christian truth. On the contrary, it affords the finest possibility of advance. Formerly, Christians feared to develop freely the richness of their faith lest they should somehow violate the rules for gaining heaven. Now we may explore every suggestion in the teachings of our Lord, freely

² Wallis, 100-101.

integrating those insights with all new knowledge of the workings of man's mind and emotions. . . .³

The message of the mainline church is enhanced by modern scholarship. Modern scholarship gave birth to modern Biblical criticism and to "new" hermeneutics. Contemporary theologies, such as liberation theology and black theology, bring back a vital prophetic role and ministry to the church, and bring greater relevancy. In this mix of new theologies and Biblical hermeneutics, the mainline Protestant church today is pregnant with concepts and ideas that enliven the Bible with relevance to the modern challenges. Thus, it carries the spark for a renewed urgency and sense of mission in mainline Protestantism. John Cobb writes:

Those who condemn the critical study of the Scriptures not only are expressing a serious lack of intellectual integrity but also are seeking to discourage the development by which alone it is possible to keep the Bible a living book . . . when the scholar shows us the Bible as a product of increasing sensitivity to the will of God and of developing understanding of the nature of God on the part of a people gifted with extraordinary spiritual sensitivity, culminating in a vision that still dazzles our eyes by the splendid simplicity of its truth, then the Bible can live for us as it has never lived since the days in which it was written.⁴

Mainline denominations have prophetic preachers (such as the Rev. William Sloane Coffin) who present the

³ Cobb, Varieties, 154.

⁴ Ibid., p. 155

Protestant message in ways that delight and inspire audiences. The mainline church has spiritual leaders and academic talent that leaves any student to marvel. It is this pool of excellence within the mainline denominations that holds the promise for a revitalization for mainline Protestantism today which can, in turn, ignite an effective television voice and ministry. It is through such talent that the Christian community can create a "new awareness of the meaning of the faith and the nature of the world in which we live and seek to bear witness."⁵ Indeed, the mainline church maintains a vital heart and has much to say.

New responses of the church, out of an awareness of the nature of the world in which we now live, are already taking place. Most immediate is the current response and debate led by the mainline church with regard to the reduction of nuclear weapons, U.S. foreign policy in Central America, and its confrontation with the U.S. government on the issue of sanctuary for Central Americans. (All the major mainline denominations have passed resolutions calling for a change in current U.S. policy in Central America.) Though the "new birth" of the church remains but a small spark, it is a promising one.

Walter Brueggeman writes in his book, The Prophetic Imagination:

⁵ Wallis, 102.

The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.⁶

Mainline Protestantism stands in the prophetic tradition and can provide such a dimension, a total lack of which is found on television today. In short, mainline Protestantism has the talent, the academic acumen, and spiritual sensitivity--a sleeping giant, if you will--to provide the prophetic dimension, and present the Gospel in a way the new age can hear. It can be presented in a way that encourages pursuit of, and commitment to, a Christ-centered life.

Correctives to Enhance Mainline Protestant
Church Use of Television

As an eye is turned here to the more effective use of television by the mainline church, it might be well to cite the progress of the Roman Catholic Church regarding television use. The Catholic Church has recently opened a television station for the Los Angeles area, Station KIHS, Channel 46, broadcasting out of Ontario, California. It is well to note that Catholic programming incorporates approaches associated with the televangelists, but it uses them in a manner that does not have the "offensiveness" and ethically questionable aspects which mark so much of televangelist programming. Solicitation for funds is done in a way that is sensitive to avoid "over sell" or appeal to the

⁶ Walter Brueggeman, The Prophetic Imagination (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 13.

baser emotional dimensions of the listener. Catholic programming provides intelligent discussion of the Bible and social issues (programs on marriage, family enrichment and child rearing are also aired), together with inspirational preaching and timely reflections for spiritual growth and moral direction. The depth and excellence in the programs are a breath of fresh air in religious television today. The point is that if the Catholic Church has found a way to present its faith through religious programming that is intelligent and sophisticated, it is possible for the mainline church to do so as well.

This investigation points to certain suggestions or correctives as to how the mainline church might use television. First, it would be well for mainline denominations to rethink their suspicion and outright rejection of "duplicating" Fundamentalist/Pentecostal programming, specifically in the area of preaching and fund raising. The Roman Catholic example is informative. Preaching is an essential part of Catholic programming, as well as fund raising. It is important to be reminded that fund raising in itself is not the problem, but the techniques and ethics used to implement it. Certainly, fund raising is a necessary part of television broadcasting today, and mainline denominations need to cultivate a more positive and practical attitude (in keeping with their particular sensibilities).

More effective use of television by the mainline

church requires, as well, a change in its attitude toward preaching and preacher-centered programming. Preaching is the single most effective tool for teaching and inspiration, as well as fostering identity. Without preaching it is questionable whether there is a viable ministry at all. A reexamination of the reluctance to showcase preaching or preaching-centered programs is a necessary undertaking in mainline television work today. As William Steel writes:

Truly great preachers are rare; they do not necessarily show up in large churches. But there is some awfully good preaching around this city [Los Angeles], and one might hope that some of it would find its way to television.⁷

It would be well to ask why our great preachers are not being placed in the forefront. If, as it is sometimes argued, the reason for not showcasing preachers is the fear of encouraging "personality cults," then the question should be, how can excellent preaching be exposed and at the same time the "personality cult" be avoided? One answer might be to create a process by which a series of preachers are used. The important point is that the perceived problem of highlighting our best preachers can be, and needs to be, resolved, so they can emerge.

In addition, mainline use of the media would be better served with a more realistic understanding of the relationship it has with the commercial networks. As discussed, the commercial networks have, for the most part, a negative

⁷ Steel, 51.

sentiment toward the religious. Further, because the mainline church is dependent upon the broadcast networks for the television exposure it does get, it too easily lets the networks shape the form and content of its message.

The mainline church need not "give over" so much of the substance of the religious program to the networks. It can use what influence it has with the networks in a more assertive manner, entering into dialogue with the programming directors and raising questions regarding the integrity and focus of the program to be produced. Though it may sound difficult, it may be easier than first believed. The ministerial and intellectual talent in the mainline church can provide a fresh dimension and suggest approaches to a particular topic that would excite network programmers. This is leverage of which the mainline church can take much more advantage in dealing with the networks.

This point is exemplified by the program, "Women and the Catholic Church." It was noted, in chapter three, how a secular bias was inherent in the title of the program itself. I have suggested that the program was formed more out of the needs of the secular media--the needs of ratings requirements--than for the interest of an objective and informative look at the Catholic Church and its attitude toward women. The program, which was in fact a disservice to the Catholic Church, could have been more positive if the Catholic Church used more of its influence to insure a

more balanced and informative program. So too the mainline church needs greater involvement in the religious programming of the networks in which they are involved.

This involvement could also influence the kind of moderators selected for religious programming. Moderators of commercial network religious programs are, for the most part, not very sophisticated or sensitive regarding the traditions and beliefs of Protestantism or Christianity in general. At best they are religious novices. The mainline church could cultivate its own moderators to work on network religious programs to insure a greater depth and sophistication in the programs.

In such ways, the mainline church could improve its voice on television; however, there is also a question of fundamentals--the teaching of the Gospel itself. The stated purpose for television programming, most specifically the United Methodist and Christian Church (Disciples), is to "tell the church's story." As was argued, this looks to be the result of the church's confusion as to just what to teach. It is important to adopt a broader purpose for mainline church programming. Such a purpose should include spiritual and religious dimensions of the Protestant faith.

A review of Jim Wallis' understanding of what the church should center itself upon today is pertinent. Jim Wallis suggests three aspects to mainline church revitalization: First, the Christian community must create "new

awareness of the meaning of our faith and the nature of the world in which we live and seek to bear witness."⁸ Second, the "Christian community must be a place for the creation of new styles of life based upon a new awareness . . . new styles of life that begin to free people from the intense pressure and demands of the present forms and patterns of the world."⁹ And, thirdly, he writes, "Christian community can begin to evoke creative responses to the world that arise from a new awareness and a new lifestyle."¹⁰ He sums up:

Most importantly, the church is to be a sign of Christ's presence in the world rather than an ecclesiastical reproduction of the twisted values of a technocratic society. The church's life must show practical and demonstrative manifestations of the meaning of Christ that a broken world cannot fail to recognize.¹¹

Jim Wallis' words provide effective guidelines for mainline church programming, and ones that are well within the tradition, experience and witness of the church. Certainly, the most important challenge the mainline church faces today is to define its purpose more specifically and its Gospel (salvific) message.

The state of the mainline Protestant movement in America today can be characterized by the following quote

⁸ Wallis, 102.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 103

if "religious movements" is substituted for "scientific models":

Scientific models [religious movements] are like the shell of a crab which contains the contents of the crab for a time. As the crab grows the shell splits, and the crab grows a larger one more appropriate for the larger animal. The process of casting off an old shell and growing a new and larger one is slow and painful. The shell of biology [mainline Protestantism] today is still an old one from the past. It is time to heave off the old shell and set about making a new one. . . .¹²

The lack of a mainline Protestant presence on television today is a symptom that its "shell" is an old one. However, within the mainline church there remains the solid foundation of the Gospel message, and the talent to present it in the "new key" that is required today. In short, the mainline church does "have something to say," and can say it in a way that brings a new vitality and sense of mission. Self-assessment is now needed in mainline Protestantism, in the interest of reclaiming the Gospel for a new age. The degree to which this is done will be the degree to which a new initiative in the use of television can proceed, and the mainline Protestant voice can be solidly established on television as a prophetic and pastoral voice for our age.

¹² Charles Birch and John Cobb, Jr., Liberation of Life (London: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 68.

DIRECTORY OF TBN CABLE AFFILIATES

CABLE SYSTEM	AREA SERVED	CHANNEL	CABLE SYSTEM	AREA SERVED	CHANNEL
ALABAMA					
Sammons Comm.	Lanett, Fairfax, Huguley, Lanedale, Riverview, Shawmut	26	Dimension Cable Service	Verne (part)	22/1
ALASKA			Falcon Cable TV	Long Beach, Signal Hill	(12 or 29)
B.C. Cable	Janeau, Douglas, W. Juneau	7 or 19		Riverside, Chapman Woods, Walnut, S. San Gabriel, Monterey Park, Montebello, Pasadena, Altadena, La Canada, Flintridge, Alhambra, Temple City, Norwalk, Huntington Park	4C
ARIZONA				Newhall, Saugus, Valencia, Castaic	12
American Cable TV	Phoenix, Chandler, Tempe, Fountain Hills, Paradise Valley, Rio Verde	34	Valley County Cable	Newport Bch., Corona Del Mar, Balboa Island, Seal Beach, Leisure World	H/21
Arizona Cable TV	Superior	11	Group W Cable	Orange	20
Jim R. Smith & Co., Inc.	Sierra Vista	6	American Cablevision of Orange	Ojai, Oakview, Meiners Oak	10*
Mogolice Cable TV	Pine, Strawberry, Black Canyon City	11	Storer Cable Comm.	Oxnard, Fort Huememe, *S	J
Casa Grande Cablevision	Casa Grande	21	Oxnard Cablevision		
Aztec Cablevision	Prescott Valley	21	Warner Amex Cable of		
CALIFORNIA			Palm Springs	Palm Springs	19
California Cable Systems	Downey, Paramount, Bell Gardens, Lynwood, Santa Fe Springs	?	Kinneloa TV Systems	Pasadena (parts), Altadena (parts)	18
	Sun City	10	TCI Pomona Cable	Pomona	10
TM Cablevision of Riverside	Redondo Beach	10	TM Cablevision of Riverside	Perris, Riverside	8
Century Cable of So. Calif.	Lebec	3	TM Cablevision of Riverside	Sunnymead, Moreno	12
Electro-Mechanical Serv.	Alta Loma	6	Remote Area Cable TV	Shaver Lake (U.S.F.S. Admin. Site)	3
Cable TV	Azusa	13	Group W Cable	San Bernardino, Highland, Lytle Creek	27
Cable Service of Azusa	Brea, La Habra Hgts.	10	Field Cablevision	Redlands, Mentone, Yucaipa, Calamesa, Highland, Norton AFB, Loma Linda (parts), Sunnymead, March AFB, Edgemont, Moreno	KTBN
Century Cable of S. Calif.	Calabassas Park	10		San Bernardino, Sun City	19
Calabassas Comm. Co.	Camarillo	9	Liberty TV Cable	Sun City	10
Televents of Camarillo	Canyon Country, Saugus, Newhall (parts)	3	TM Cablevision of Riverside	Mission Viejo, El Toro, Lake Forrest, Aegean Hills, Silverado, Trabuco, Coto de Caza, Modjeska Canyons, Laguna Niguel, Tustin (parts)	10
Western CATV	Carlsbad, Broadmore, Fallbrook, Pala Mesa, Lake San Marcos, Del Mar	18	TM Cablevision	San Clemente (E. side of fwy.), San Juan Capistrano, Capistrano Bch.	10*
Carlsbad Cablevision	Carson	34	Cox Cable San Diego	San Diego, National City, Ocean Bch., Allied Gardens, Bonita, Chula Vista, Del Cerro, El Cajon, Encanto, Fletcher Hills, Imperial Bch., Lakeside, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Santee, Nester, Paradise Hills, Pt. Loma, San Carlos, Poway, Spring Valley	26*
	Chowchilla	30		San Jose, Campbell, Cupertino	5*B
Walnut Valley Cable TV	Diamond Bar, Rowland Hgts.	40		Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, Isla Vista, Montecito, Summerland	17
Storer Cable Comm.	Fillmore, Piru	6	Cox Cable	Goleta Mission Canyon	7*
Group W Cable	Fullerton	40	King Videocable Co.	Sunland, Sun Valley, Pacoima, Tujunga, Lakeview Terr., Kagel Canyon	12
Sammons Comm.	Glendale, Burbank, La Canada, La Crescenta, Sylmar	8		Thousand Oaks, Moorpark, Newbury Pk., Agoura, Calabassas, Lake Lindero	14
	Half Moon Bay, El Granada, Montera, Moss Beach, Ft. Ord Army Installation	9	Storer Cable Communication	Santa Maria, Orcutt	I/22
	Hemet, San Jacinto	17	Group W Cable	Ventura (part), Casitas Spgs.	17
	Hermosa Bch., El Portal, Manhattan Bch., Rolling Hills	26	Avenue TV Cable Service	Whittier	10
Dickinson Pacific Cable System	Huntington Bch., Fountain Valley, Westminster	27	Sammons Communications	Westchester, Playa del Rey	25
Communicom	Hollywood/Wilshire District, Culver City, Maywood, Covina, La Verne, Corona, Tustin	10	Jack Berry Cable TV		
Inglewood Cable	Inglewood	L	Multi-View System of		
Community Cablevision	Irvine, Newport Bch., Tustin	25	Woodland, Inc.	Woodland	15
Storer Cable Comm.	Laguna Bch., Dana Point, Emerald Bay, Laguna Hills, Laguna Niguel, S. Laguna Bch., San Juan Capistrano (west), San Clemente (part)	12	Yorba Linda Cable TV	Yorba Linda	6
	Leisure World of Laguna Hills	D	Valley Cable TV, Inc.	Encino, Woodland Hills, Tarzana, Canoga Pk., Receda, Northridge	19
Rossmoor Electric, Inc.	Lake Elsinore, Canyon Lake, El Cerrito, Lakeland Village, Wildomar, Meadowbrook	12		Fontana	27
King Videocable Co.	Sedeo	12	Group W Cable of Fontana	Bakersfield	E/18
	La Mirada, Rossmoor	32	Cox Cable of Bakersfield	Riverside, Rialto, Muscoy, Rancho Verde, Upland, Alta Loma, Monrovia, La Verne, San Dimas, Glendora, Pomona, Duarte, Bradbury	6
California Cable Systems	Lancaster, Palmdale, Quartz Hills, Edwards AFB	6	Spacepac	Anaheim (soon to add Villa Park)	38
Antelope Valley Cablevision	Loma Linda	18		Manteca	33
	Los Angeles, Eagle Rock, Atwater, Boyle Hgts., El Sereno, Elysian Park, Glassel, Griffith Park, Highland Park, Hollywood, Lincoln Hgts., Mt. Washington, Silver Lake, Studio City, Bell Canyon, El Segundo, Santa Monica, Bel Air, Beverly Crest, Brentwood, Pacific Palisades, W. Los Angeles, Westwood, Beverly Hills, Marina Del Ray, W. Hollywood, Sherman Oaks, Encino, Tarzana, Woodland Hills, Ontario, Alta Loma (part), Cucamonga (part), Upland, Montclair, La		Storer Cable	Santa Paula	14
			South County Systems	Vista, Escondido, San Dieguito, San Marcos, Romona, Oceanside (parts)	L/25
			Storer Cable Communications		
			Times Mirror Cablevision		
			COLORADO		
			Greeley Video, Inc.	Greeley, La Salle, Evans, Weld County	30
			Tri-Town Cablevision, Ltd.	Frederick, Dacono, Firestone, Evanston	?

DIRECTORY OF TBN CABLE AFFILIATES

CABLE SYSTEM	AREA SERVED	CHANNEL	CABLE SYSTEM	AREA SERVED	CHANNEL
MileHi Cablevision	Denver	17	Plaines, Park Ridge, Arlington Hgts.,		
Longmont Comm. Corp.	Longmont	28	Schaumburg, Hanover Park, Bartlett,		
Douglas County Cablevision	Castle Rock, Parker, Fitzsimmons Army Base,		Streamwood	105	
	(parts) Douglas County	8			
United Cable Television of Colorado	Englewood, Sheridan, Aurora, S. Jefferson		INDIANA		
	County, Arvada, Federal Hgts.	37	Clark County Cablevision	Jeffersonville, Clarksville, County of Clark,	
United Cable Television Corp.	Grand Junction	14*		Sellersburg, Charlestown	3
American Cablevision	Thornton, Wheatridge	37	New Castle Cable comm.	New Castle	10
CONNECTICUT			Connersville Cable TV, Inc.	Connersville	2
Sammons Comm. of Connecticut, Inc.	Waterbury, Middlebury, Platts Mill, Plymouth,		Connersville Cable TV, Inc.	Rushville	7
Group W Cable	Poquabuck, Prospect, Terryville, Wolcott	Q	Clearview Cable TV	Richmond, Centerville, Spring Grove, Dublin,	
FLORIDA	Danbury, Bethel, Ridgefield	E		Hagerstown, Cambridge City, Milton, Mt.	
America Cable Assoc.	Homestead, Cutler Ridge, Florida City,			Vernon, E. Germantown	3
	Goulds, Kendall, Key Biscayne, Naranja, W.			Winchester, Fountain Valley (future)	3
Telecable	Dade, Princeton, Whispering Pines	27	LIBERTY CABLE TV		
Cable Video Comm., Inc.	N. Lauderdale, Coconut Creek, Parkland	9	KENTUCKY		
Selkirk Comm., Inc.	Bradenton	34	Comcast Cable of Paducah	Jefferson County	16*
Perry Cable TV Corp.	Hallandale	35	Storer Cable of Jefferson County		
	Jupiter, Palm Bch. Shores, Tequesta, Palm		LOUISIANA		
	Bch. Gardens, N. Palm Bch., Lakepark M/26		Cox Cable of New Orleans	New Orleans	23*
Cable TV of Coral Springs	Coral Springs	19	Washington Cablevision	Bogalusa	2
Leadership Cablevision	Delray Bch., Gulf Stream, Ocean Ridge	8	MASSACHUSETTS		
Selkirk Communications	Ft. Lauderdale, Lauderdale by the Sea,		Chicopee Cable TV	Chicopee & Hampden counties	S
	Oakland Park, Sea Ranch Lakes	3	Greater Webster Dudley	Webster, Dudley	R
Dynamic Cablevision of Florida	Hialeah, Hialeah Gardens, Medley, Miami Spgs.,		Cablevision		
	Sweetwater, Virginia Gardens, Coral Cables,		Milton Cablesystems Corp.	Milton	11*
	Fountainbleau Park, W. Miami	25	Quincy Cablesystems Corp.	Quincy	11*
Telecommunications, Inc.	Homestead AFB	13	Newburyport Cablesystems Corp.	Newburyport, Newbury & West Newbury	11*
Broward Cable TV	Broward County, Cooper City, Lauderdale		Arlington Cablesystems Corp.	Arlington	11*
	Lakes, Dania, Davie	10	MICHIGAN		
Perry Cable TWV Corp.	Green Acres City, Palm Spgs., S. Palm Bch.		Coldwater Cablevision, Inc.	Woodhaven, Trenton, Gibraltar, Riverview	41
	City	K	United Cable Television	Birmingham, Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms,	
American Video Corp.	Pompano Bch., Deerfield Bch., Lazy Lakes,		Booth Communications of	Franklin	49*
	Lighthouse Point, Wilton Manors, Landerhill,		Birmingham	Madison Hgts., Hazel Park	36
	Tamarac, Sunrise, Hillsboro Bch.	45/33	Continental Cablevision	Ann Arbor	6
Evans Cablevision	Orlando, E. Orange County, Ovedo (future)	6	Ann Arbor Cablevision	Wayne Cablevision	38
Storer Cable TV of Florida	Miami Shores, Miramar, N. Miami, N. Miami		Pontiac Cablevision	Pontiac, Waterford	22
	Bch., Pembroke Park, Pembroke Pines, Dade		Continental Cablevision	Southfield, Oak Park, Lathrup Village	23
	County, Biscayne Park, El Portal	9	Group W Cable	Wayne	38
Hollywood Cablevision	Hollywood	WHFT	MINNESOTA		
GEORGIA			Chaska Cable Television	Chaska	35
Larry's Cable TV	Milner, Williamson, Orchard Hill, Unicorp.		Shakopee Cable Television	Shakopee	35
	Sec. of Spalding, & Lamar Counties		Worthington Cable TV	Worthington	28
Southern Telecom	Peachtree City, Fayetteville, Fairburn, Union		MISSISSIPPI		
	City, Unicorp., Palmetto, Grantville,		Rube Cablevision	Edwards	7
	Shenandoah, Hogansville, Sendia	2	MISSOURI		
Cartersville Cable TV	Cartersville, Barto County	29	Gateway Comm., Inc.	Florissant, Blackjack, Unincorp. County	2/27
Southern Telecom	Villa Rica, Powder Spgs., Bremen, Temple,		NEBRASKA		
	Buchanan, Bowden, Carroll County	11	Coxcable of Omaha	Omaha	15*
Sammons Comm.	West Point	26	NEVADA		
ILLINOIS			Community Cable TV	Las Vegas	6
General Electric Cablevision	Peoria, Tazwell & Woodford Counties	13*	NEW JERSEY		
Jones Intercable	Benton, Buckner, Christopher, West City	8*	Community Cable TV	Turnersville, Braddock, Monroe Washington,	
Jones Intercable	Duquoin, Pinckneyville	10*		Waterford, Winslow, Twp	A
S. Illinois Cable TV	Herrin, W. Frankfort, Johnson City, Energy,		National Video Systems	Seaside Hgts., Lavallette, Seaside Park,	
	Crainville, Cartersville, Harrisburg, El Dorado,			Berkeley, Dover Twp	21/M
	Murphysboro	7*	NEW MEXICO		
Marion Cablevision	Marion, White Ash	4*	Sun Cable TV	Deming	26
Carbondale Cablevision	Carbondale	9*	Albuquerque Cable	Albuquerque	R*
Anna-Jonesboro Cable TV	Anna, Jonesboro	2*	Cablecom of Roswell	Roswell, Walker AFB	12*
World Cablevision	Mt. Vernon	6*	NEWYORK		
World Cablevision	Wayne City	10*	Gateway Cablevision Corp.	Montgomery County, Fulton County,	
World Cablevision	Sesser, Valier	8*		Amsterdam, Hagaman, Fonda, Brodablin,	
World Cablevision	McCleansboro	13*		Mayfield, Perth, Ft. Johnson, Fultonville	28
Continental Cablevision	Elmhurst, Forest Park, Franklin Park, River		Poughkeepsie Cablevision	Poughkeepsie, La Grange, Pleasant Valley	8
	Grove, Morton Grove	25	Walden Video Corp.	Walden, Crawford, Maybrook, Montgomery,	
Cablenet, Inc.	Mt. Prospect, Prospect Hgts., Wheeling, Des			Newburgh, Pine Bush, Shawangunk	12
			Ellenville CATV Assoc.	Ellenville, Wawarsing, Manakating,	
				Woodridge, Fallsberg, Rochester	12
			Apple Cable TV, Inc.	Dover, Amenia, Washington, Millbrook,	

DIRECTORY OF TBN CABLE AFFILIATES

CABLE SYSTEM	AREA SERVED	CHANNEL	CABLE SYSTEM	AREA SERVED	CHANNEL
Vidacable	Northeast, Millerton	D	Shen-Heights TV Assoc.	Shenandoah, Brandonville, Eash Union Twp., West Mahoney	13
Olive Cablevision	Rosendale, Tillson, Bloomington, Creek Locks, Maple Hill, Binnewater, Cottekill, Stone Ridge, High Falls, Marbletown	8	Honesdale TV Service	Honesdale, Indian Orchard, Seelyville, White Mills	13
Vidicom of Saugerties, Inc. Group W Cable	Olive Bridge, Shokan, W. Shokan, Boiceville	12	Erie Telecommunications	Erie	24/B
U.S. Cablevision Corp.	Saugerties	8	Armstrong Clear Channels	Kittanning, Ford City, Manorville, McGrann, Ford Cliff, Worthington, Middle Armstrong County	8*
U.S. Cablevision Corp.	Newburgh, Cornwall, Cornwall on Hudson, New Windsor, Newburgh town, Marlboro, Milton	3	RHODE ISLAND		
Orange County Cablevision	Wappinger, E. Fishkill, La Grange, Lloyd, Poughkeepsie, Wappinger Falls, Beacon, Fishkill, Highland, Marlboro, Plattekill, Hyde Park	8	Full Channel TV	Warren, Barrington, Bristol	29
	Monroe, Blooming Grove, Harriman, Woodbury	10	Rhode Island Cable TV	Providence, N. Providence, Pawtucket	43
	Orange County, Bloomingburg, Blooming Grove, Goschen, Highland Falls, Highlands, Mamakating, Middletown, Washingtonville, Wurtsboro, Wallkill	12	SOUTH CAROLINA		
NORTH CAROLINA			Fort Hill Cablevision	Seneca, Central, Clemson, Pendleton	11
New Bern Cable TV	New Bern Trentwood, River Bend, James City	15	Columbia Cable TV	Columbia, Cayce, Springdale, W. Columbia	6
Tar River Cablevision	Rocky Mount, Nashville, Tarboro	N/27	Alert Cable TV of S. Caroline	Georgetown	28
Greenville Cable TV	Greenville, Ayden, Winterville, Pitt County	21	SOUTH DAKOTA		
OHIO			Sioux Falls Cable TV	Sioux Falls	12*
West Shore Cable TV	Westlake, N. Olmsted	33	TENNESSEE		
Jackson Cable Systems	Lewisburg	31R	Tenn. Valley Cablecom, Inc.	Centerville, Mt. Pleasant, Holienwald	6
Viacom Cablevision of Dayton, Inc.	Dayton, Mad River Twp, Butler Twp, Village of Riverside	27	Sammons Communications	Morristown	2
Continental Cablevision	Englewood, Trotwood, Union, Vandalia	13	FNI Communications	Columbia	6
Miami Valley Cable, Inc.	Hamilton, Fairfield, St. Clair Twp, Trenton, New Miami Village, Seven Mile Village, Wayne, Milville, Hanover, Ross, Middletown, Franklin Twp, Carlisle, Monroe, Miami Twp, Madison Twp	26/M	TEXAS		
Tele-Media Co. of Western Ohio	Greenville, Greenville Twp	?	Midwest Video Corp	Bryan, College	27
OKLAHOMA			Centel Cable TV of Texas	Northwest Harris County	31
Master Cable Corp.	Velma, Ratcliff City, Pruitt City, Fox	21	Warner Amex Qube Cable	Dallas	54*
Tulsa Cable	Tulsa, Broken Arrow, Sand Springs	22*	Duncanville Cable TV	Duncanville	0
El Reno Cablevision, Inc.	El Reno	6	Storer Cable	Addison, Carrollton	26
Trans Am Comm.	Ada	6*	CBS/Blackhawk Cable	Hurst, Haltom City, N. Richland Hills, Keller	21
Cablevision of Guthrie	*Guthrie	6	American Cablevision Corp. of Kingsville	Kingsville, Kingsville N.A.S.	P
Edmond Cablevision	Edmond	6	Group W Cable	Irving	B/32
McCloud Cablevision	McCloud	F/19	Sammons Communications	Ft. Worth	M/26
Cablevision of Bethany	Bethany	6	Benbrook CATV	Benbrook	0
Warr Acres Cablevision	Warr Acres	6	CBS/Blackhawk Cable	Midlothian, Mansfield, Waxahatchie, Everman	21
Southern CATV, Inc.	Tuttle, Mineo	6	Columbia Cable North Shore	Galena Park, Jacinto City	33
American Cablevision of Midwest City	Midwest City, Spencer	26	Columbia Cable of Roseburg	Roseburg	12
Yukon Cablevision, Inc.	Yukon	6	Roundrock Cablevision	Roundrock, Brushy Creek	25
Cablevision of Nichols Hills	Nichols Hills, The Village	6	Community Cablevision Corp.	Bryan, College Station	35
Jones Intercable	Shawnee	F/19	Par Community Cable	Proctor, Hasee, Par Village, Bluff View, Buffalo	7
Cox Cable of Oklahoma City	Oklahoma City	16	Brownwood TV Cable	Brownwood, Early, Bangs	19*
Cablevision of Del City	Del City, Valleybrook	6	Texas Cable TV System	Wheeler	3*
Cablevision of Moore	Moore	6	Times Mirror Cable TV of Midland	Midland	4
Cablevision of Mustang	Mustang	6	VERMONT		
Norman Cable Television	Norman, Hall Park	28	Better TV Inc.	Bennington, N. Bennington, Old Bennington, Shaftsbury	12*
Multimedia Cablevision	Tinker AFB	6	VIRGINIA		
OREGON			Continental Cablevision	Richmond, Henrico County, Ashland	32*
Storm Antenna	Siletz	11	Roanoke Valley Cablevision	Roanoke, Vinton	22*
Cox Cable The Dalles	The Dalles, Dallesport	11	WASHINGTON		
Cox Cable Lower Columbia	Astoria, Long Beach, Seaside, Hammond, Warrenton, Gearhart, Ilwaco	13	Cowlitz Cableview	Longview, Castle Rock, Columbia Hts., Kalama, Kelso	16
PENNSYLVANIA			Cox Cable of Spokane	Spokane, Millwood	9
Cablevision of Penn., Inc.	Norristown, Bridgeport, Conshohocken, East & West Norriton Twp., Lower Providence Twp., White March Twp., Whitepain, Montgomery County	T	Cable TV Puget Sound	Tacoma, Ranier, Roy, Vashon Island, Yelm	6*
			Cox Cable of Aberdeen	Aberdeen, Central Park, Cosmopolis, Hoquiam	10*
			WEST VIRGINIA		
			Watts Cable TV	Delbarton	9
			WISCONSIN		
			Nor-Com Video, Inc.	Spencer	7
			Viacom Cablevision	Bayside, Glendale, Shorewood, Whitefish Bay, Foxport, River Hills, Brown Deer, Greenfield, Greendale, Franklin, S. Milwaukee, Cudahy, Oakcreek, Hale's Corner	40A
			Total TV of Manitowoc	Manitowoc	25

* Denotes Part-Time Carriage

NEW SATELLITE TIME SCHEDULE

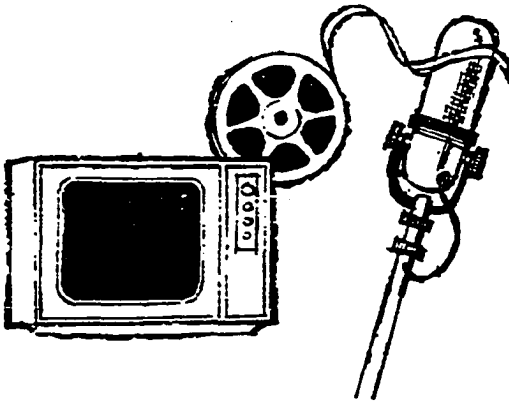
TBN Network Pacific Time

Translate to Your Time Zone

TIME	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
12:00 AM	HERITAGE SINGERS	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD
12:30 AM	DON WELLMAN						
1:00 AM	ROBERT						
1:30 AM	SCHULLER						
2:00 AM	DR. JAMES KENNEDY	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> SONNY ARGUINZONI	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> HERITAGE SINGERS	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> JOE BIAZ	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> DR. PAUL BILLHEIMER	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> STEVE BROCK	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> SATURDAY NIGHT ALIVE
2:30 AM	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> THE LIFE OF CHRIST	LIFE OF CHRIST	LAVERN & EDITH TRIPP	DR. WHITAKER	SERMONS FROM SCIENCE	PUBLIC REPORT	
3:00 AM	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN
3:30 AM	FRED PRICE	KAY ARTHUR	JUAN CARLOS ORTIZ	MARILYN HICKEY	DAN SHEAFFER THE ANSWER	KENNETH HAGIN	PUBLIC REPORT
4:00 AM	ROGER MC DUFF	LESTER SUMRALL	LESTER SUMRALL	LESTER SUMRALL	LESTER SUMRALL	LESTER SUMRALL	GET IN SHAPE PAMELA COLE
4:30 AM	LLOYD OGILVIE	DR. REX ROOK	PASTOR ED SMITH	CAROLE HAMPTON	TIM AND BEVERLY LA HAYE	DR. WHITAKER	NANCY
5:00 AM	PASTOR DAN SHEAFFER	BIBLE BOWL	KPTL	ONE WAY GAME	THE LIFE OF CHRIST	KPTL	HARMON
6:00 AM	JAMES ROBISON	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	PASTOR ED SMITH
6:30 AM	FATHER JOHN BERTOLUCCI	GET IN SHAPE PAMELA COLE	GET IN SHAPE PAMELA COLE	GET IN SHAPE PAMELA COLE	GET IN SHAPE PAMELA COLE	GET IN SHAPE PAMELA COLE	RISE
7:00 AM	PASTER HAROLD ADAMS	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	KPTL
8:00 AM	DR. JAMES KENNEDY						ONE WAY GAME
8:30 AM	JOHN OSTEN						BIBLE BOWL
9:00 AM	KENNY FOREMAN						TRINITY FILM FEATURE
9:30 AM	PASTOR JOHN HINKLE	CHERRIL PREWITT BLACKWOOD	CAROLE HAMPTON	JOE BIAS	SONNY ARGUINZONI	PUBLIC REPORT	
10:00 AM	DR. CHARLES TAYLOR	DR. RICHARD DOBBINS	FATHER MANNING	DR. PAUL BILLHEIMER	KENNETH HAGIN	CHUCK SMITH	BRUCE THUM
10:30 AM	DR. CHARLES TAYLOR	KAY ARTHUR	HERITAGE SINGERS	STEVE BROCK	DR. WHITAKER	DON WELLMAN	PASTOR HOSTELLER
11:00 AM	DWIGHT THOMPSON	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	JOY WITH JIM MCCLELLAN	DR. RICHARD DOBBINS
11:30 AM	DR. DOUG CLARK	LESTER SUMRALL	LESTER SUMRALL	LESTER SUMRALL	LESTER SUMRALL	LESTER SUMRALL	THE LIFE OF CHRIST
12:00 PM	CARL RICHARDSON	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	BETTY JEAN ROBINSON
12:30 PM	JIMMY SWAGGART						DR. JACK HAYFORD
1:00 PM	SWAGGART						FRIEDMAN & FRIENDS
1:30 PM	CHERYL PREWITT BLACKWOOD						DOTTIE RAMBO
2:00 PM	DEMOS SHAKARIAN	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> KPTL	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> ONE WAY GAME	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> AIA SPORTS BILL BRIGHT	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> BIBLE BOWL	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> KPTL	SPANISH PRAISE THE LORD
2:30 PM	DR. ROY BLIZZARD	DR. WHITAKER	DOTTIE RAMBO	BETTY JEAN ROBINSON	JUAN CARLOS ORTIZ	TIM AND BEVERLY LA HAYE	DAVID ESPINOZA
3:00 PM	DON WELLMAN	DR. WHITAKER	DOTTIE RAMBO	BETTY JEAN ROBINSON	JUAN CARLOS ORTIZ	TIM AND BEVERLY LA HAYE	DAVID ESPINOZA
3:30 PM	GARY GREENWALD	MARILYN HICKEY	JOE BIAS	DR. JACK HAYFORD	ROGER MCDUFF	DIANE BISH	DR. CHARLES TAYLOR
4:00 PM	FATHER MANNING	LAVERNE & EDITH TRIPP	HAL LINDSAY	KENNETH HAGIN	DWIGHT THOMPSON	FRED PRICE	ROBERT SCHULLER
4:30 PM	LLOYD OGILVIE	JACK VAN IMPE	DAN SHEAFFER THE ANSWER	DR. DOUG CLARK			
5:00 PM	KENNETH COPELAND	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	JAMES ROBISON
5:30 PM							DR. ROY BLIZZARD
6:00 PM							NANCY
6:30 PM							HARMON
7:00 PM							ZOLA LEVITT
7:30 PM							DAN SHEAFFER THE ANSWER
8:00 PM							
8:30 PM							
9:00 PM							
9:30 PM							
10:00 PM	NANCY HARMON	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> BETTY JEAN ROBINSON	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> CHERYL PREWITT BLACKWOOD	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> DEMOS SHAKARIAN	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> DOUG CLARK	<small>BEHIND THE SCENES JOHN AYAYONG, SPEECH COORDINATOR, JR. ARTHUR BLISSITT</small> DOTTIE RAMBO	SATURDAY NIGHT ALIVE
10:30 PM							
11:00 PM							
11:30 PM	JERRY BARNARD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	PRAISE THE LORD	SONNY ARGUINZONI
							O.S. HAWKINS

All programs listed in **BLACK** are paid for by your telethon dollars — production and/or air time.

In your area there may be some local television programs inserted in these time slots.



Telling United Methodism's Story With Audiovisuals

By, for, with . . .

Audiovisual, radio and television productions at United Methodist Communications fall into these three categories. Productions "by" UMCCom are those the agency conceives and creates, using its own staff, funds and studios. "For" signifies projects produced by UMCCom, yet funded by a client. And, still other projects are cooperatively funded and produced by UMCCom in conjunction "with" other sponsors.

The roster of UMCCom productions this year is an impressive one. It includes video and audio, television, radio and cable, films and filmstrips, slide shows and multi-media presentations. UMCCom producers and technical staff were involved in more than 80 audiovisual projects from September 1983 to September 1984. Read on for a list of resources UMCCom produced, co-produced or participated in by way of consultation. Some have been completed; others were still in progress as of Sept. 1.

Title or Working Title	Medium	Sponsor/Client	Description	Status
From the Word Go	Film/Video	United Methodist Bicentennial Committee, UMCCom, Board of Discipleship (BOD), Board of Higher Education and Ministry (BHEM), United Methodist Publishing House (UMPH), General Council on Ministries (World Service Contingency), Board of Church and Society (BCS), Board of Global Ministries (BOGM)	Magazine-format film produced for 1984's Bicentennial celebration.	Completed
Clayride--A Gallop through Methodist History	Film/Video	UMCCom	Clay animation survey of Methodist history, excerpted from "From the Word Go."	Completed
From the Word Go--open captioned versions	Video	UMCCom	English captioned (for the hearing-impaired) and Spanish captioned versions of the Bicentennial film.	Completed
A Gift of Song	Video	Pan-Methodist Bicentennial Committee	Music and narration, featuring five choirs from the Methodist-heritage denominations participating in the Bicentennial.	Completed
Strangely Warmed	Script, musical score and audiotape	United Methodist Bicentennial Committee	Original musical for production by local church choirs.	Completed
Christmas Eve Special	TV	Pan-Methodists, CBS-TV	Hour-long Christmas Eve service from Lovely Lane Church, Baltimore, Md.	Completed
A Lost History	TV	NBC-TV, National Council of Churches (NCC)	TV special on the contributions of women in 200 years of Methodist history--researched, scripted, consulted on and marketed by UMCCom.	Completed
Bicentennial Media Ads	Radio/TV	UMCCom	Series of four Bicentennial TV spots and 32 radio spots.	Completed
United Methodist Satellite Service	Cable	UMCCom	One hour of previously-produced programming provided to cable systems via the Alternate View Network, Shreveport, La., and, beginning in June, one half-hour weekly via the Southern Baptists' ACTS network.	In Progress
Bicentennial Musical	Video/cable	New York Annual Conference	Videotape of live Bicentennial musical production.	Completed

Title or Working Title	Medium	Sponsor/Client	Description	Status
Common Ground	Video cable	United Theological Seminary	Ongoing script consultation for cable program.	In Progress
Mission with a Little Magic	Video cable	BOGM	Mission story told through use of magic.	In Progress
Christmas Connection	Radio	SandCastles International	Production consultation, marketing and interviewing for ecumenical special.	Completed
The Great American Feast	Radio	SandCastles	Production consultation and marketing for ecumenical Thanksgiving special.	Completed
Impact Religion	Radio	NCC, NBC-Radio	Produced three programs of this NBC-Radio talk show.	Completed
General Conference Newsfeeds	TV	UMCom	Produced nine TV news clips and 25 annual conference clips at General Conference and filled individual station requests.	Completed
General Conference Video Coverage	TV	UMCom	Provided pool video coverage of all sessions of General Conference for use by producers.	Completed
Festival 200	Video	UMPH	Edited version of live Bicentennial stage show at 1984 General Conference.	Completed
Pre-General Conference Videotape	Video	UMPH, UMCom	Introduction to issues scheduled to come before the 1984 General Conference.	Completed
General Conference Audiotapes	Audio	UMPH, UMCom	Series of three audiotapes reporting on General Conference.	Completed
From Circuit Riders to Digital Circuits	Multi-Media	Tennessee Annual Conference	A look at Methodism's past and present in Tennessee.	Completed
Wilbur Awards	Multi-Media	Religious Public Relations Council	Awards presentation incorporating clips of winners.	Completed
Born to Give ... Born to Grow	Multi-Media	UMCom	Multi-media presentation detailing the growth of the Advance, incorporating segments of "Born to Give" film.	Completed
Born to Give ... Born to Grow	Video	UMCom	Video version of multi-media presentation.	In Progress
World Service Conference Benevolence Series	Filmstrip	UMCom	Previously-produced World Service slides combined with annual conference slides and narration.	In Progress
Special Days Series	Filmstrip	UMCom	Six-part series promoting Human Relations Day, One Great Hour of Sharing, Student Day, World Communion Sunday, World Order Sunday and the overall philosophy of Special Days.	In Progress
Interdenominational Cooperation Fund	Filmstrip	UMCom	Fund promotion produced by the World Council of Churches.	Completed
Water Is Life	Film	UMCom	Film promoting the One Great Hour of Sharing, produced by Church World Service.	Completed
Advance	Film	UMCom	Motion picture promoting the Advance, to be filmed in Africa and the U.S.	In Progress
Black College Fund	Video	UMCom	Promotion of the Black College Fund.	In Progress
Benevolence Interpretation	Audio	UMCom	Description of church benevolences for visually-impaired audience.	In Progress
Giving Starts a Chain Reaction	Video	UMCom	Two video cassettes edited from film by same name.	Completed
La Junta Series	Video	La Junta Consultiva de Comunicaciones	Video recordings of national workshop training sessions.	Completed
You Can't Do That in Church	Video	BOD	An examination of the nature of ministry.	Completed
Korean Series	Video	UMCom, Interfaith Media Center at Claremont	Four-part series in the Korean language, describing the structure and workings of United Methodism.	Completed
Theology and the Relational Vision	Video	UMCom, Interfaith Media Center	Eight-part series on process theology.	Completed
Growing Through Grief: Personal Healing	Video	UMCom, Interfaith Media Center	Six-part series on coping with grief.	Completed
On Prayer and Praying	Video	UMCom, Interfaith Media Center	Four tapes on prayer and meditation.	Completed
BHEM Annual Report	Video	BHEM	Video report about BHEM's work in 1984.	In Progress
Division of Higher Education Report	Video	BHEM Division of Higher Education	Report on the work of this BHEM division.	In Progress

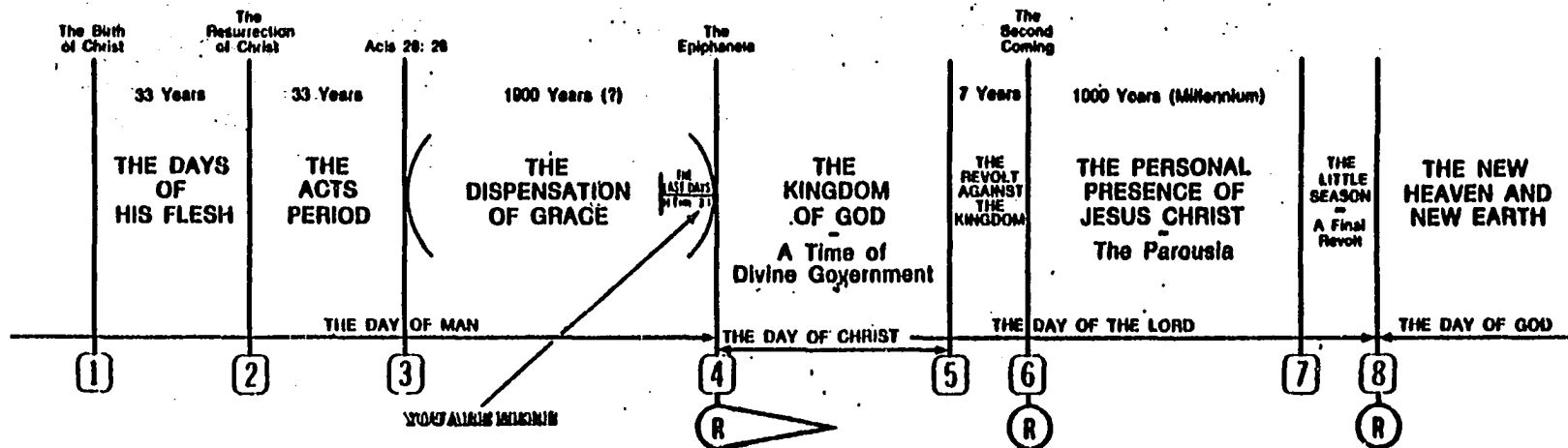
Title or Working Title	Medium	Sponsor/Client	Description	Status
Asian Music	Video	Asian Caucus	Edited tape of music by choirs of Asian churches.	Completed
Violence and Vengeance	Video	Educational Designs for Justice (Rochester, N.Y.)	A look at breaking the cycle of violence and vengeance.	Completed
Evangelism Video	Video	Bishop Leontine Kelley	Introduction to the techniques and theology of sharing personal faith.	In Progress
Active Learning for Youth	Video	BOD	Series of four tapes exploring new methods and mediums available to church school teachers.	Completed
Board of Ministry Training Tape	Video	BHEM	Resource for annual conference boards of ministry.	Completed
Campus Ministry: Memoir and Mandate	Video	BHEM	A look at past and present campus ministries.	Completed
The Good Mind	Video	UMPH	Consultation provided on this UMPH-produced film on Native American religious traditions.	Completed
A Warm Heart Makes a Difference	Video	Florida Annual Conference	A report on the program of the Florida Annual Conference Council on Ministries.	Completed
Social Principles	Video	BCS	History of and contemporary look at social principles.	In Progress
Our Story	Video	UMCom	Introduction to the work of UMCom.	In Progress
Sow Seeds, Trust the Promise	Video	NCC Outdoor Ministries Committee	Four-part series on outdoor ministry.	Completed
Does Anybody Really Care?	Video	United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)	Videotape on Haitian refugees shot on location in Miami.	Completed
Wiping Away The Tears	Film	American Leprosy Mission	Introductory segment for UMCOR film by same name.	In Progress
United Methodist Center	Video	BOD, BHEM, Upper Room, Scarritt College	Slides and recorded script transferred to video for visitor/employee orientation.	Completed
Video Transfer Project	Video	BHEM	Existing slide and video presentations combined on two videotapes.	Completed
A Parable and 20th Century Ministry	Video	BHEM, UMCom	Four programs examining the parable of "The Rich Man and Lazarus" from four perspectives.	In Progress
Parenting: Expectations, Feelings, Communicating, Fear, Discipline and Trust	Film Video	UMCom, Elizabeth Murdock Institute	Six-part series on effective parenting.	In Progress
Adult Learning: For Such a Time As This	Film	BOD	Documentary film exploring new ideas for adult Christian education.	In Progress
Adult Learning	Video	BOD	Four training tapes on the concepts of Christian education, to be used with "For Such a Time As This."	In Progress
The Career of Horville Sash	Film/Video	UMCom	Animated fable about the Biblical themes of incarnation and servanthood.	In Progress
The Silver Stream	Film	Presbyterian Church U.S.A., BHEM	Storytelling film on stereotyping.	Completed
Nativity	Film	UMCom	Examination of Nativity scenes collected from around the world and the cultures they reflect.	In Progress
Women: Called To Ministry	Filmstrip	BHEM	Stories of four clergywomen.	Completed
Peacemaking	Filmstrip	Presbyterian Church U.S.A.	A look at alternatives to war and the development of peace.	Completed
Public Relations Project for General Church Agencies	Filmstrip or slide show	UMCom	Explanatory look at the work of each United Methodist general agency.	In Progress
West End Christian Education	Slides	West End UMC (Nashville)	Stewardship promotion.	Completed
Faces, Saul-David, Death, Praise the Lord, People to Belong, Dumping Donuts, Hosanna, Coach Is A Peacemaker, God's Blessing, Psalm 98: Serve the Lord, Christmas Traditions, I Remember Playing, Celebrating Seasons, Summer Songs, Forgiving Father	Audio/sound sheets	Graded Press (UMPH)	Fifteen projects for various age groups.	Completed

THE ORDER OF EVENTS

When one becomes familiar with the Bible he will surely know that it tells of many important events that are yet to come. And he will know quite well that the final event, beyond which divine revelation does not go, is that God makes "all things new" (Rev. 21:5); that this brings in a new universal state of things called the new heaven and new

If we keep moving backward from the revolt against the

The letter *R* below lines 4, 6 and 8 denote the resurrections. It should be noted that the resurrection of all who enter the kingdom does not take place at one time. It will be each one in his own order and in harmony with the divine purpose. This explains the diminishing shape of the enclosure



earth (Rev. 21:1), a condition of things which is also called "the day of God" (2 Peter 3:12, 13). The beginning of this is marked on the chart by line No. 8.

There are many who believe that the new heaven and the new earth is the next event in the divine order, and that it is produced by and immediately follows the second coming of Christ. This idea suddenly emerged and was quickly established about 1800 A.D. when the present intensive study of prophecy was only in its infancy. It ignores altogether much that God has said about things to come, making nugatory much of the Word by claiming it was fulfilled by some event in history.

Working backward from the new heaven and new earth we find in Revelation 20:1-7 a period spoken of six times as "a thousand years." This is the period of time that men call "the millennium" (from the Latin word *mille* which means a thousand, and the word *annum* which means years). However, the Biblical name for this period is the parousia, a word which has been twisted to make it mean "coming," but which really means (when used of a person) a personal presence when one is present because of who he is (his position) and what he does in fulfillment of his position (See Issues No. 24 and 25). The parousia or personal presence of Christ is introduced by His second coming, and this is indicated on the chart by the line marked No. 6.

At His coming (*erchomai*) one of the first acts of His personal presence (*parousia*) is that He lays hold of Satan

kingdom we come to the most important time period in divine revelation, marked out by lines No. 4 and No. 5 in the chart. This is the time period of the kingdom of God, a long period of divine government. This is the era that is unrecognized and ignored by all present well-known writers and teachers who deal with prophecy. They take everything the Bible says concerning it and dump it all into the time period of the millennium. If it will not fit there, they simply ignore it, a fact that is seen in their treatment of Matt. 12:18-21. This passage sets forth three positive divine actions: (1) He shall show judgment to the nations; (2) He will send forth judgment unto victory; (3) In His name shall the nations trust. If God did these things today the world would never again be the same. God's promise made in Rom. 15:12 would find its complete fulfillment: "There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall arise to be a ruler over the nations, in Him shall the nations trust." This is a beautiful picture, the nations trusting in Jesus Christ. It explains why nations will be willing to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

The kingdom of God begins with many concurrent events, the chief of which is the divine assumption of sovereignty, Jesus Christ taking to Himself His great power and governing. We see this in Revelation 11:17 where the twenty-four elders are seen giving thanks to God for something which He did in the past and what He is then doing as a result of this action: "We give Thee thanks, Lord God Almighty,

around the letter *R* at line 4. The resurrection at line 6 is that of the martyrs who lay down their lives in the revolt against the kingdom. A clear distinction should be maintained between those who "sleep in Jesus" in 1 Thess. 4:14 and "the dead in Christ" in 1 Thess. 4:16. The entire time period of the kingdom of God comes between these two passages. The resurrection of those who "sleep in Jesus" is connected with the presentation of Christ and the resurrection of "the dead in Christ" is related to His parousia.

The "catching up" described in 1 Thess. 4:17, commonly called "the rapture" in present-day prophetic messages, is not God's next move in relationship to the world. It is so vitally linked to the parousia that it would be chopping up the Word of God to separate them by a period of seven years. Furthermore, there is no "secret coming" set forth in this passage. Anything that is accompanied with a shout, the archangel's voice, and the blast of a trumpet can hardly be called a secret coming.

I believe that there is a place on the chart for everything in the New Testament and for every unfulfilled prophecy in the Old. In order to make it as simple as possible most details have been left out. Lack of space has made it impossible to say all that should be said about the time period between lines 3 and 4. The reader can fill this lack by referring to *SEED and BREAD*, Issues No. 11, 14, 16, 53, and 64.

IN THE ABOVE message twelve issues of *SEED AND BREAD* are mentioned by number only. If the reader would like to fully participate in this Bible-learning experience he should have these twelve issues and read them in connection with the chart and message presented above. To facilitate this we have made up a special package containing these eleven studies. They are as follows:

- No. 11 The Importance of Acts 28:28
- No. 14 What are "The Last Days?"
- No. 24 What Does Parousia Mean?
- No. 25 The Parousia of The Lord Jesus
- No. 39 The Great Tribulation
- No. 40 The Great Testing
- No. 53 A Psalm for Today
- No. 64 God's Present Purpose
- No. 96 God's Presentation of Christ
- No. 113 The Kingdom Restraints
- No. 114 The Kingdom Rebellion

This package will be sent to anyone who asks for it at no cost or obligation whatsoever. You will not be visited or solicited, and neither will your name be placed on our

mailing list. In the package you will also find a card which if you return to us you will receive all future issues of *SEED AND BREAD*. Please trust me when I say I want to give something to you, not to get something out of you. If you would like this package of eleven messages, send a card or letter to the address at the bottom of this page. This offer is obtainable by mail only. Do not telephone. No personal interviews.

THERE IS AN inward state of the heart which makes truth credible the moment it is stated; it is credible to many because of what they are.

I HAVE FOUND that when you carefully search out something in the Word of God for yourself, piecing all the clues and bits together, it remains for the rest of your life in some way truer than

those things you are merely taught, and will always be free from onslaughts of doubt.

YOU ARE RIGHT, I am not setting forth a vague and indistinct form of Christianity. This may be what the multitudes want, but I am not providing it. Thanks for your compliment.

AS THE INCESSANT march of events brings mankind ever nearer to the verge of the eclipse of civilization and the destruction of the

human race, the question arises as to whether we can expect any definite and manifest move on the part of God in regard to these matters. My answer to this is yes, positively yes. God will intervene, even as He declares in His Word: "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. 59:19). This standard will be the divine assumption of sovereignty, the coming of the kingdom (government) of God upon the earth. Then we can truly say among the nations that Jehovah has

become King. He has fixed the world. It shall not be shaken. He will judge the peoples with equity (Psalm 96:10 — literal translation of the Hebrew).

"To a simple-minded person anything that challenges what they think to be true is emotionally upsetting." OQS.

"IN THE ALMOST universal cry for the most elementary truths, the deeper things of God find little acceptance, and are apt to be slurred as being the result of "straining" or as fantastic. But there are still some who believe that the Bible, being the Word of God, must have depths of truth, not on the surface, but which are the portion given to patient industry and searching." F.C. Jennings.

WE MUST NOT let go of manifest truths because we cannot answer all questions concerning them." Jeremy Collier

MY DEFINITION of truth is that truth is that which conforms to the facts. For example, "Philadelphia is a city in Pennsylvania," is absolute truth because it conforms to the facts in the case. In relationship to the things of God, truth is that which conforms to the facts declared in God's Word, the Bible. "Thy Word is truth" is a declaration made by Jesus Christ and recorded in the Sacred Scriptures. Therefore, the divine truth that one knows is the Bible which he knows. God's Word presents facts by the millions, but to get these facts it must be rightly divided, correctly translated, and honestly interpreted. This is hard work, but it is something to which I have given sixty-five years of my life. OQS.

THIS IS NO. FOUR IN A SERIES APPEARING IN THIS PAPER

Presented By

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

OTIS Q. SELLERS, Bible Teacher, Executive Director

P.O. BOX 480055

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90048

NOTES

Appendix A

"Praise-A-Thon-Nov. 14-18," Praise the Lord, Nov. 1983: 31-32.

Appendix B

United Methodist Church, Office of Public Publication, United Methodist Communications Annual Report, Helping the Church Tell Its Story in 1984. Nashville: UM Communications, 1984.

Appendix C

"The Order of Events," Los Angeles Times, 19 Jan. 1985, pt. II: 5, col. 1.

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